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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ROAD TO SELF, AS LIVED THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING A FEMALE AND A PROFESSIONAL

BY

COLLEEN JOYE MAC DOUGALL

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA
SPRING, 1994

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Two roads diverged
in the woods, and I - I took
the one less travelled by, and that
has made all the difference.
- Robert Frost (1930)

DEDICATION

By A. Carlyle

This work is dedicated to
all those professional women
endeavoring to travel THEIR road.

Abstract

This study emerged out of a personal need to answer the question of how being a professional had influenced my life as a female. I embarked on a journey with ten other women who represented a range of experience in terms of type of professional work, length of experience, age, and martial and maternal status. Through phenomenological-heurmeneutic inquiry, I reflected on the process inherent in that journey as it began in childhood, and, while moving forward, as it also at times needed to loop back on itself. Movement along the journey spoke to the essence of becoming internally rather than externally defined, of becoming more intent on being rather than just doing. Such movement was captured in four themes: Being Told Who I Can Be, Not Knowing Who To Be, Fighting For Who I Am, and Growing In Who I Am. Awareness and understanding of this journey stretched my preconceptions about what it meant to be female, as well as what it meant to be professional. I learned that the two were intrinsically connected and that it was in their reciprocal interaction that meaning and integration were to be found.

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Who do I thank, for there have been many who have shaped my life as a female and as a professional. From God who created my life, I was born to parents who from the start gave all they could to see that their daughter would realize her full potential. My mother, Doris, instilled in me the will to learn, and modelled her strong belief that women had the ability to make valuable and simultaneous contributions to family as well as to the lives of others. My father, Keith, toiled for my chance at freedom, teaching me through his honest words and his steady example that perseverance would eventually reward me and get me where I wanted to go.

Then there was a formal learning system that perhaps through it's own development, brought me along on my journey in remembering that there was more than one way to know. Who have been my teachers? I recall from grade ten, Mrs. Palmer, an older and "ready to retire" lady who upon my return to school after a lengthy hospitalization, listened to my despair over having gotten so far behind my peers. I remember Dr. Marianne Doherty-Poirier, who as a professor in my Master's program was really much more than an academic teacher. Her interest in me as a person, as a woman, as a young professional eager to learn, gave me my first experience of being mentored.

It was in this most recent part of my journey, however, in the writing of this dissertation, that I felt the most affirming connection with women who by listening to my initial awkward mumblings about that which I needed to understand, offered their expertise, but as well their person in helping me give life to what I felt inside. To Dr. Jean Clandinin, I remember your early invitation for me to reflect on how I would answer the question for my own life. Your perceptiveness nudged me closer to awareness of my inner feeling world. To Dr. Maryanne Bibby, your enthusiasm for qualitative inquiry was infectious, as your personableness and sensitivity to me as an individual was valued. I remember your encouraging note after meeting the requirements of my candidacy exam.

To you, Dr. Paula Brook, I recall your openness in sharing with me your own experiences as a female faculty member. You provided a safe place for me to continue exploring my question, and you pointed me toward experiences where I could possibly make a difference for those coming new into the professorial profession. To Dr. Lorraine Wilgosh, you taught me the importance of honoring our "whole" experience as professional women. In doing so, you began to take me beyond the fragmentedness of my own life.

To you as my advisor, Dr. Ronna Jevne, while I have wanted to absorb the way of learning that you model, I most want to thank you for your willingness to be patient while I struggled with all those old voices that confined me in my way of being. By feeding questions and possibilities back to me, you helped me remember what I knew rather than telling me what I should know. I sensed your soul as you taught me to be open to mine. I learned from you.

I acknowledge those who shared in this journeying experience by giving me the privilege of using photographs which they created, but which resonated with the experiences as articulated in this document. To Dr. Ronna Jevne, Daphne Carlyle and Art Carlyle--you have enriched the representation of an intricate process.

Perhaps at the most intimate level, I thank you, my inner girl-child for not abandoning me, even though I at times abandoned you. Thank you for not letting go.

Colleen

EVOLUTION OF AN INQUIRY

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GENESIS OF A QUESTION...

> *"Real development is not leaving things behind, as on a road, but drawing life from them, as from a root."*
>
> *- G.K. Chesterton (cited in Running Press, 1991)*
> *British Writer*

> When I was a little girl, I had a special friend named Sarah and for hours we would play "house", either in my parent's attic or down at an old abandoned neighborhood home. Some days we were loving mothers, feeding our babies the best powder mixture our real mother's cabinet could supply. Other days we'd squeal and strut ourselves around in the hoops and finery found at the bottom of any one of the many trunks stored about. We got married daily to men we didn't necessarily seem to need around, but knew any self-respecting woman should have. In hysterically-pitched voices we would sing to anyone willing to be our audience, and in tones of authority we would shout commands to all those under our employ. I held dear my plans for being the next Florence Nightingale, and would listen to Sarah's chest, predicting indeed that the next day her heart would be mended. I was intoxicated with all the potential my life promised. Such were the innocent but passionate dreams of my youth...
>
> (My reflections at 36 years old)

As I relive those light-hearted and promising memories some 30 years later, and strain to remember that little girl, tears burn behind my eyes and I cry out, "what happened to you, child?" It is as if she is sitting beside me, looking up to me for the answer, but I can only weep as the tears spill onto my face. I turn and reach down to hold her. "I don't know", I mumble, "you had a good dream."

This child grew up, never for a minute thinking that she might not have all her dreams fulfilled--that she might have a family, a profession, and a happy home, as well as a contented heart. She intuitively knew her loving, healing nature, and had a warm and comforting vision of all the ways in which she was going to nourish that nature in her life. She was raised by diligent parents who taught her that she could "do" anything she wanted to do. They honored her caring spirit, but also taught her that hard work, perseverance, and discipline were necessary to succeed in life. With this knowledge in place, it seemed all would be good, good, good, win, win, win! My memory is that she was wholly alive, and lived life with a sense that she had everything she needed.

Though she was full of promise, however, I do remember that her childhood was sometimes lonely because she felt that many of her peers did not like her. As I write this, I feel the same salty tears and confusion she felt about herself when those peers excluded her from games but asked her to help with studying when test time came. I feel her sense of alienation from a community that she believed did not accept her. Her pain seared deep but since she knew no escape, the hurt was just packed down, harder and harder with each blow. Perhaps it was offset by all the accolades she received for her intelligence, for her talent in singing, for her dark shiny curls. She was born to parents whose generation had not yet been taught the importance of affirming children's feelings, who perhaps did not know how to nurture the inherent worth in their child. It had not been done for them.

This child's journey continued into adulthood and the adult did take her to nursing school, but her compassion to nurture and to connect with those in her care was butchered by a discipline which she experienced as leaving little room for feeling. She learned that the goal was to get the task done, to treat the patient's condition without allowing her own grief for the pain and suffering she witnessed, to show. Her desire to find meaning, to hear the human story behind the disease, was stifled by the need to study facts and learn technique. This taxing of her logical mind left barren and forsaken any sense of her inner feeling world, and she began to accept that such was not going to be part of her higher-level learning experience. She did not hear any contrary messages. Her passionate spirit wilted further in this arid place, and her understanding of how to sustain it herself was not yet developed. Her dreams deserted her for they no longer seemed so honorable.

She left the nursing school, and for the next sixteen years wandered in a fog of alienation--from herself, from her hurts, but also from her passion and dreams. She fervently believed that her only salvation was in her intellect for that was a part of her that she knew had not deceived her, that she had control over. For those sixteen years, she raced along on the freeway of her life, and I the adult, joined with her in a union that was frenzied by a search for validation through skill and achievement. Her esteem and sense of worth were defined by her grades, by her skill in teaching, by her possessions, by her ability to stay thin. Thus, when she was given a "C" in a course, she knew no other way to feel other than unworthy; when she gained five pounds, she believed she was unacceptable to look at. She allowed her self to be defined by others for she had lost the ability to define herself.

I, the adult, abandoned this child in her loss, and thus essentially abandoned my own wisdom and vulnerability. I accepted instead the roadsigns of the day which clearly read "compromise", "focused dedication", "ferocious independence", and "hard-nosed thinking." They were to be my tickets to success. My intellect did serve me well and I excelled--in the world of academics and in my work, but I had denied and discarded other important parts of who I was.

In the 33rd year of my life, I entered a doctoral program which was to be the crown attesting to my worth. I submersed herself with the same feverish intensity for here I hoped to find the purpose and fit which had eluded me, that which I believed others to have found. I clung to my intellect for I felt safe there, and I crossed out the other parts of me that were thirsting but making themselves known in ways that I did not understand--ways like depression, isolation, anxiety. Maybe it was then, at those times when my feelings became strong enough, that I was essentially forced to get off the freeway, heed my body's signs, and follow them to the places I needed to go. I started to remember the little girl who once believed she could make all, and not just some, of her dreams come true. This experience was not a one-time revelation, but a gradual emerging of a part of me that while it seemed alien, was at the same time strangely familiar. I knew it, but I didn't. I was both afraid of it and comforted by its' refusal to remain silent. Maybe it was the disorder it brought that I was wary of, for I had invested so much of my energy in staying in control.

I did a meditative exercise about that time in one of my classes where the leader asked us to locate a feeling that we were now experiencing somewhere in our bodies. I remember closing my eyes and searching, searching, searching...It took some time before I could feel anything, for me to even understand what a feeling might be like. After about five minutes, I did sense a heaviness in my hips (in the area of my womb). She asked us then to create an image of what form that feeling might take, and I imagined a hard rock with bolts of lightening slamming into it and attacking it! On her next instruction which was to visualize that form asking for what it needed, and getting it, I felt an utter torrent of anger cascade over my whole body, followed almost immediately by a paralyzing sadness. Shaking, with tears searing the edges of my eyes, I represented this feeling on paper, but wrestled with my fear that said vulnerability was weak and would be taken advantage of. I decided at that moment to let my fence down, and to acknowledge that there was indeed something very deep inside that I needed to bring into the light.

Thus, I started to question. What was my anger and sadness about? The amazing thing to me was that when I started to ask the right questions, the answers were not that far away. I screamed my rage at a culture that had not heard that little girl's cries, that did not tell her she could voice her hurts. I ranted at a discipline that I felt had sucked the life right out of her, and then I cried, rainfalls of tears, for what felt like the death of a little girl's spirit. I mourned the loss of relationships, the crippling of hope. I felt deep resentment at one of my external graduate supervisors who in trying to teach me how to be a "professional" therapist, had stressed that one needed to keep his or her feelings out of it and be neutral. While I accepted her teachings intellectually, a voice inside me said, "does that mean I cannot care?"

The child was a survivor and did not die, for when I was willing to go into the depths with her, she reached out her arms to me and gave me the strength of her spirit that said we had to start asking some very important questions if our journey was to change. We had to take responsibility for part of that change by first confronting our own old patterns of hiding behind defences. This conscious tearing down of our wall brought me to this study. I wanted to know if I was alone on my journey. I wanted to know if my reflections and misgivings were just symptomatic of my own life dynamics, of approaching middle-age, or if they represented a new place for me to be that was much less contrived and much more real than the place in which I had spent the last sixteen years. Was it a place other professional women could identify with? I admit I was afraid to start voicing such misgivings because to do so might be perceived as traitorous to the women's cause, to my predecessors who had fought for the same things I was questioning. I found safe places to start voicing my disappointments--in my journal, with a compassionate friend, an older colleague. But perhaps my fire was finally lit by the very education system that I held partly accountable for the demise of my spirit. That system, in beginning to recognize qualitative methods of inquiry, was now admitting that there were other ways to know, to ask. It was even encouraging me to consider the contributions of my self in that process. This was reinforced by an advisor who dragged out of me ways of knowing that I did not remember I was capable of. My feelings were a mixture of "Wow", and "Can I really trust this"?

I began to have an idea of a general question, which was, how had my pursuit for meaning through academics and work, influenced my life? This led to a second version, which was, how had being a professional influenced my life? I took that question to classmates and colleagues, to professional women I knew, and also spent time in silence trying to hear what my own self was asking. This made me realize that my quest was really more specific in that I wanted to know what had happened to my dreams of nurturing, to a nature that was once impassioned more by connectedness than by isolation, more by openness and responsiveness than by defenses of expert knowledge. These qualities could be defined, I suppose, in numerous ways--right-brain, intuitive, feminine. Based on my reading and growing awareness of how the feminine might be described (Gilligan, 1993; Goldher Lerner, 1993; Williamson, 1993), and on my own agreement with these authors, I was able to shape my question to be: **How has Being a Professional Influenced Your Life as a Female?** Using the word "female" rather than "woman" was a point of decision for, based on discussions with my advisor and colleagues, the former appeared to be less value-laden. Also, the direction of the wording was intentional. I believed researchers had asked the question the other way around, that is, "how being female had affected professional life." The wording I chose was specifically aimed at eliciting the influence on our femaleness.

At this point, it is important to note how the question itself was influenced by the emerging process of the study. While my specific question did get answered, the women's narratives quickly revealed that the focus on the influence of being professional only, was too narrow. What became more apparent was that while the professional world did indeed influence one's femaleness, there were also other influences at work--influences that were more pervasive and systemic. For example, for many of the women, early family dynamics also served to devalue that essential part of who they were.

Despite this shaping and broadening of the question, the objectives of the study remained: (a) to understand how being a professional has influenced our lives as females, and (b) to a much more minor extent, to deliberately provide an opportunity for professional women to begin reflecting on this experience, and if they found their lives wanting as I did, to find those touchstones within themselves that would take them where they wanted to go. In other words, it was my hope that the interview experience itself would have some therapeutic value as the women allowed a space in their lives for this reflection.

As I began by taking readers to the root of my desire to know, my intent is that they will follow my process as I explain, in the remainder of this document, how I shaped the study to honor the experiences I wanted to know about, what the women told me, and finally, how those discoveries both affirm and challenge what we currently know. A discussion of how I honored the women's experience in shaping the study is detailed in the chapter on "Re-searching a Reality." I used the word "re-searching" on purpose because on completing an initial literature review ("Preconceived Directions") and finding it of limited assistance in answering my question, I had a strong need to depart from the "structuredness" of that traditional approach and open myself up to a design that would naturally emerge as I listened to the women "re-construct" their experience. In other words, I was attempting to fit the approach to the purpose, rather than trying to manipulate the purpose to fit within the confines of a predetermined and mechanized approach (Howard, 1986).

The themes which emerged from my conversations with the women are described in "Re-discovering Self Through Becoming Internally Defined, Through Being." Then, in the closing chapters, "Discussion and Links With Existing Understandings" and "Implications for a Generation", I try to place what I learned in the inquiry within, respectively, the context of present knowledge, as well as future research direction.

As the reader follows this inquiry that I took with the ten women, my intent is that she/he will become sensitive to the actual "process" that I had to personally work through in answering my question. That is, the steps in that process are revealed as I experienced them; i.e., the definitions are listed as I had to grapple in understanding the parameters of my quest. The result is that the document reads as a "meta-description" of a descriptive process, as a story about how through loosening of structure, I came to more fully comprehend the connective power of drawing in knowledge from the more web-like nature of human existence.

I celebrate this opportunity to travel along with the women who agreed to come with me. I speak my experience through the power of their words. Thus, this work is not only a revelation of their lived experience, but it seems impossible that it would not also represent a weaving in of my own story. I tried to capture that integration in a closing epilogue.

PRECONCEIVED DIRECTIONS

"Do not think your truth can be found by anyone else."

- Andre Gide (cited in Running Press, 1991) French Writer

Where could I go to learn what I sought to know? My intuitive mind would have me go first to the professional women themselves, for it was they who held their truth. The dictates of my scientific mind, however, as well as the requirements of traditional research training, decreed that I start with the academic literature. From the beginning, this contradiction between my intuitive and scientific will caused a conflict that at times sapped my very energy for the study, and I wrestled with a system that was not where I was, though I probably could not have explained where I thought that was.

My master's level training in the early 1980's had taught me that one conducted a literature review for three main reasons: to find a research question, to further define or give credibility to a possible question, and to ensure that the question was going to add to the professional literature. I didn't believe I needed the literature to tell me that it was an important question to research for I was now feeling defiant with my new-found permission to listen to my own intuitions. I didn't require the literature to help me shape my question, for I found more credibility in seeking the feedback and criticism of my peers and colleagues. They were women who represented knowledge and experience, and who I felt genuinely understood my quest. I didn't want to follow the rigidity of the scientific method which had taught me that there must always be a well-defined problem, to which there would be a clear and logical answer. I wanted to honor the "process" I was working through, both academically and personally, in forming the question. While I had hopes that my research would be published in the scholarly literature, my mind fought for my more immediate need of finding something that would offer meaning to my life, as well as to the lives of other professional women.

While still wrestling with these confines, I did find support in my reading (Cooper, 1984; Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987; Merriam, 1988) for approaching the literature review in a way that recognized the less than major role I needed it to play in forming this inquiry. Cooper notes that literature reviews can be "integrative" where past research is reviewed and synthesized, "theoretical" where the emphasis is on relevant theory, or "methodological" where the concentration is on methodology and definitions. My interest was in the integrative since I only wanted to know: (a) what, if anything, had been done around my question, and (b) how useful the studies were in furthering my understanding of the question. This integrative emphasis fit with what Merriam (1988) has noted as one function of a literature review--that is, "to provide the foundation for contributing to the knowledge base" (p. 62). I knew that after gathering my data and analyzing it that I may wish to go back to the literature, but I did not want prior reading to bias what I might hear from the women I was to interview. In this sense, then, there would be two reviews--an initial one to critically analyze the "usefulness" of what was already known, and a succeeding one where I would relate what I had found to existing knowledge. At the same time, in my initial critical analysis I wanted to have the freedom to look more in depth at those studies which contributed in a greater way to my quest. That is, I wanted to summarize and synthesize without having to give each study reviewed equal emphasis. The validity of this selective approach is supported by Cooper (1984), as well as Locke, Spirduso and Silverman (1987) who collectively affirm that an initial review can be only to set the boundaries of an inquiry rather than to expound on the parameters of particular studies which have limited relevance. Upon reading a number of more recent qualitative studies (Bergrem, 1989; Clarke, 1993; Massing, 1991; Reynolds, 1990), I observed there to be precedents to approaching the initial review in this way.

With these "permissions" in mind, I was able to approach this initial review with a more open mind. Not to my surprise, I found few studies which addressed my question in any meaningful way. What was available was mainly a small assortment of descriptive studies which told me little more than I already knew from my own experience. While this affirmed my experience, I did not learn beyond that by going to the literature, at least at this stage. I think it is enlightening in itself, however, to point out why this was so. I observed that: (a) studies on this population were limited largely to statistical reports, and to comparative lists of advantages and disadvantages between working-class or at-home women and professional women, leading to underdeveloped suppositions and questionable interpretations; (b) despite the growing body of knowledge (Belenky, Clinchy, Oldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1993; Westcott, 1986) declaring unique patterns in female development (e.g., relational versus linear), the literature on professional women continued to focus predominantly on more concrete, role-related concerns; and (c) in addition to being statistical descriptions, many studies were up to ten years old. Together, these three features could not address any sense of movement in professional women's lives over time. In the following paragraphs, I discuss each of these three limitations in detail, identifying relevant sources.

Statistical/Descriptive Reports

In regard to my first observation, by far the majority of existing studies on professional women were statistical/survey-type reports documenting, among other things, the increasing number of women entering professions (Bodger, 1985; Ministry of Labor, 1990; Statistics Canada, 1990), particularly traditionally male-dominated professions. While it was indeed heartening to know that up to 40% of law students are now female (Gini & Sullivan, 1988), and that the number of women entering veterinary medicine is up by 8% (Blau & Ferber, 1987), this did not help me understand the experiences of these women. Are they really feeling accepted, or is this a politically correct move on the part of institutions that depend on public funds to carry out their mission?

Additional studies relied on other quantitative measures of where professional women fell on certain personal traits, apparently depicting what advantages these women were gaining from their work. Pietromonaco, Manis, and Frohardt-Lane (1986) in their survey reported a higher frequency of self-esteem among professional women than among women who worked at home. Keown and Keown (1985) noted that professional women were more likely than non-professional women to indicate a high degree of pride in their accomplishments, and Rosenfield (1989) found professional women to report increased feelings of personal control. All of the above studies were surveys where the data was correlated to test for significance. Based on the descriptors chosen for the studies, one could surmise what these women's experiences might be like. However, there is little depth to what that actually looks and feels like on a daily basis for the women.

Job satisfaction is another variable that has received a good deal of attention in the literature on professional women. Aside from the quantitative limitations of these studies (frequency and correlation), however, the results are also inconclusive. Pietromonaco, Manis, and Frohardt-Lane (1986) reported professional women to be highly satisfied with their careers, although since the study asked only closed survey-type questions, we know little about what makes their jobs satisfying. Also drawing from professional samples, however, but in contrast, other studies (Gini & Sullivan, 1988; Montgomery, 1989; Repetti, Matthews, & Waldron, 1989; Smith, 1990) have evidenced growing dissatisfaction among professional women. These latter studies attest to the fact that increasing numbers of women are dropping out of management-type positions because the positions are not compatible with their needs and goals, or because their needs and goals have changed. The women reported that the personal costs have been too high, whether in terms of not having time to have a family at all, that the family-career conflict has been too difficult, or simply that their health has been adversely affected. While these latter studies do go beyond a closed question format to include a listing of reasons, thus giving more insight into some of the experiences professional women are undergoing, we are still left not knowing what these changes actually mean to the women. What process did they undergo in deciding to leave? Would they connect such reasons with their femaleness, and if so, how is one to assume that they define their femaleness? Also, in face of the discrepancies among the studies measuring job satisfaction for this population, one is left wondering what the reality might actually be. Possibly professional women are divided.

Other survey or case study approaches focused on role conflicts (Cote, 1986; Rudd & McKenry, 1986), salary differentials (National Council on Welfare, 1990; Regan, 1990), and on steps corporations are taking in trying to accommodate women's domestic responsibilities (Ilgen, 1990; Solomon, 1991; Zedeck & Moiser, 1990). These also did not comment on the experience of how being professional influences one's femaleness.

A last point in this first observation about the limitations of the statistical studies is that the figures were often left open to interpretation. Scase (1987), for example, has used his findings of 51% of female managers being married and 20% having children compared to, respectively, 90% and 84% for male managers, to support the view that high-profile professional women are more likely than at-home women to be single and childless. Similarly, reports (Montgomery, 1989; Taylor, 1986) documenting professional women as being more likely than working-class women to be single, childless, or to postpone marriage and children, are also used to support the above position. Since we have heard little from the experience of women themselves, we really have no clear understanding as to what the numbers mean. While it is reasonable that women believe marriage and children would conflict with their career, it is also conceivable that they may just be less interested in those roles or that there are other dynamics in their lives that would better explain their circumstances. In addition, the authors' interpretations do not take into account more systemic possibilities, such as men's reactions to having partners who can now wield more public power than they, or governments' slow response to legislation that would ease childrearing responsibilities for women.

Lack of Integration Between Professional Work and Female Development

Concerning the second observation about the lack of integration in the literature between professional work and female development, I believe my awareness of this gap grew more by reading the literature and realizing what it didn't include, than through a crystal-clear idea of what I expected it to say. That is, as I read the above quoted articles and reports, the material most readily available on computer searches about professional women, I became even more convinced that there were parts of the female experience that were being missed; e.g., how professions might extend the need for connectedness, how females were treated in the workplace. It would appear that this may be shifting with some of the newer studies (Kaschak, 1992; Robbins Jones, 1990) now being published. Kaschak's book, while not based on actual research, nevertheless provides an excellent exposition on how women can begin to define themselves on their own terms rather than always in contrast to men. Robbins Jones did speak directly with 50 women, and she comments on how women empower themselves differently from how men might. It is exciting to think that this could be indicative of a transition in how we study professional women. However, it is important to note that these resources were not available when I began the study and thus did not offer me any prior understanding to what I sought to know.

Of the studies which were available prior to my inquiry, I found five in the professional literature which indirectly made attempts to answer my question. A most notable one was completed and documented by McBroom (1986) in her book, The Third Sex. Her qualitative analysis of professional women's lives offered a deeper insight into those women's experiences. Her main finding centered around the concept of "divided self." The women talked about the "erosion of personal identity into professional roles that are in the end devoid of intimacy...joy and existential meaning" (p. 24). While this was a meaningful study to read, it fell short of answering my question. It did not fully examine what a divided self might mean for a gender which is reported to place great importance on connectedness (Gilligan, 1993).

C. Marshall (1985) provided a literature review describing a process whereby women administrators (not defined) move from a place of being culturally-defined to being self-defined. The strength of this author's review is that it does address the issues of process. However, that process is the author's interpretation of a culmination of cross-sectional research. The validity of her discussion cannot be automatically transferred to the developmental life experience of individual women. I also question whether a focus on "self" can be immediately substituted for a study of the influences on femaleness.

Dealing more directly with this concept of femaleness are three articles, by J. Marshall (1985), Dimidjian (1983), and Ramsey McGowen and Hart (1990). Marshall discussed the tendency for women managers to "mute their femaleness to gain organizational acceptance" (p. 172). She even identified what some of these female values might be--interdependence, being, acceptance, receptivity, and perception of wholes. However, she admits that her paper is a discussion of "assumptions and ideas" (p. 169) rather than a study of actual women and their experience. In addition, her selection of female descriptors comes from her own theories rather than any feedback from women themselves.

In the article by Dimidjian (1983), the author examined the dreams of six female therapists for the following content: relational ties, professional achievement, self-exploration, and nurturing relationships. The purpose was to look at how these concepts guided the therapist's personal and professional development. While this really addressed more of an "interaction" between the femaleness and the therapists' work, and thus was not directly asking my question, it at least did discuss the two variables in conjunction--a situation I was having difficulty finding. Disappointing to me, however, in terms of addressing my question, was that the results were used only to support the belief that dreams were an important part of therapy with female clients.

The latter of the three articles, by Ramsey McGowen and Hart (1990), was more helpful. As two female professors, they discussed their experiences in graduate school and in teaching as those experiences affected three gender-specific qualities--relational focus, distance versus intimacy, and contextual decision-making. The authors point out that women are often cut off from their relational focus because they learn quickly that such is not rewarded in the workplace and will therefore not lead to the promotions they want. The expression of anger and disagreement may also be difficult because of a woman's fear of abandonment or disapproval. They suggest that taking failure and betrayal personally is again more characteristic of women's experience because of the contextual way in which women view situations. I found this to be an excellent discussion of how being professional could influence femaleness. The discussion was of the experience of only two women, but it was powerful in its' simplicity.

Apart from these five more research-focused papers, I did find one personal narrative (Walker, 1986), as well as three reports in the popular literature (Gibson &

Warkentin, 1991; Smith, 1990; Taylor, 1986). Walker (1986) talked candidly about her frustration as a social worker in a system which continues to base its practices on the ideologies of the male power structure, a position which she feels demands that she sometimes ignore the realities that she personally knows to exist in women's lives. She described how having to take that neutral stand suffocated an integral part of her existence. This could have been a much more powerful account of her experience if she had been able to articulate and describe what that part of her existence was. As for many women, perhaps such description may have felt elusive and beyond her ability to express.

The Gibson and Warkentin (1991) study of 12 professional women living in Toronto brought forward a range of comments from "I don't feel in any way incomplete in what I'm doing" (p. 81), to "[realizing] that I'm lucky...I got out of [my top management job and had children]...otherwise I would have felt very empty" (p. 81). This latter participant agreed that she needed time for reflection on what she had been doing, but that the need was not any more driven by a desire to have children than by other things such as changing careers or just getting off the fast-track. One woman commented that she believed there was now a swing back to a more "spiritual" (p. 85) emphasis where ownership of goods is no longer the yardstick of success. The study suggests that contemporary professional women may be starting to awaken to the need for more balance in their lives. While informative, however, the study lacked depth and there was no indication of methodological rigor as would be expected by any scholar evaluating the study.

Smith (1990) and Taylor (1986) both attempted to explain in their articles the exodus of women from management. Taylor simply proposed some of her own ideas. One of these was that the women are just fed up with trying to get somewhere it seems too difficult to get. Smith, while quoting reasons women offered themselves for leaving--family issues, career advancement issues, corporate culture issues--nevertheless goes no further that to list these reasons.

Based on my observation that "femaleness" is still a relatively new concept in research, but that brave women are indeed starting to crack the mold and speak out, it is perhaps not surprising that more recent studies would be integrating that female experience into current inquiries. When I began this study, however, this information was not available, to me or to the women whose lives I have herein described. I believe this lateness has perpetuated a silence for women like myself who are only starting to question if the two domains, professionalism and femaleness, can co-exist, and how. As

I describe in the themes coming from the interviews, the women did have great difficulty in putting the two concepts together. So that I may give a true description of how I actually shaped this inquiry, I will discuss those more recent studies in a later section connecting my results with existing knowledge.

Existing Studies Being Older

My third and final critique of the research I reviewed was that of these studies which did exist and which I have reported here, many were up to eight years old. This is inadequate and gave little suggestion of movement or process. It is reasonable to expect that women will have had some time to gain insight, perspective, and power as they grow in numbers, as they mature, and as the women's movement advances.

In retrospect, I was not surprised by these limitations in the literature on professional women--an overrepresentation of descriptive approaches; a near absence of integration explaining the experience of being female and professional; the tendency for studies to be older--for that research came out of a system that perhaps knew only the popular standards of the day. Possibly science was seduced by the same myths that women were in regard to how one begins to know. They were myths steeped in tradition and reinforced through decades of "that's the way it's done." I understand this heritage for I was reared in it. I also empathize with how very risky it would have been to break from that tradition. However, at this point in my research career, I feel myself pulled toward a way of knowing that is more meaningful to me. What I am saying here is that while rifling back through the pages of historical inquiry helped me understand their place in the research process, I at the same time knew that I needed this present study to be different. I knew I wanted to go beyond brief descriptions and "concretized" moments in time. I wanted to honor the actual day-to-day, lived experiences of these women, and be open to movement and process in their lives. It was to be a way, I learned, that was going to speak to movement in my own growth and awareness.

RE-SEARCHING A REALITY

"I learn by going where I have to go."

- Theodore Roethke (cited in
Running Press, 1991)
American Poet

What would it mean to employ an approach that honored women's experience? Based on my personal experience, on my reading of feminist writers and postmodern research issues, and on my professional work with women, it meant at least three things to me: (a) recognizing systemic influences that would play a role in my interaction with the women I studied; (b) choosing an approach to inquiry that would validate, and also heighten the experiential component of being female and pursuing a professional life; and (c) being a professional woman myself, realizing that it would be impossible for me to completely separate myself from experiences which would meld with my own. This potential for influence needed to be recognized, and demanded that checks for trustworthiness be integrated into the research process.

In the following paragraphs, I will explain in greater detail how these three considerations created the frame within which I sought to find an answer to my question. In doing so, while I want to give credit to all those scholarly writers whose words helped free me to approach my inquiry in the way that I did, I also want to recognize the subjective knowledge that came from within myself as well as from other women I talked with. Together the knowledge voiced, "This is pretty personal. You'll have to approach [the women] in ways that respect their right to reveal what they want"; "My guess is that you'll get an immediate gut reaction, but I'm not sure that that many of us have ever really thought about it or tried to articulate it beyond the anger we feel"; "The women may be afraid to talk about what they really feel in case it negates all that they've done to get where they are", "Maybe I won't be able to separate my feelings from theirs" (excerpts from journal notes). The point I want to make here is that my knowledge about how to proceed was not all academic; rather I saw academia as facilitating, broadening, deepening, giving direction and substance to voices that were more immediate to me. I will move in my discussion of the three above considerations from the broadest to the more personal.

Recognizing Systemic Influences

The view that women have been silenced by a culture that invalidates their worth is not a new one. Almost as soon as I say that, however, I feel I have to justify it to those who will say, "We've all been oppressed, men and women", or, "Well, women have allowed themselves to be silenced." As I have matured in my understanding of gender issues, I will agree that men too have their issues, that women have not taken full responsibility for their lives, that gender may even not be a factor in explaining some relational situations that we humans find ourselves in. Women do not have the monopoly on pain and isolation. However, I cannot take away from the experience that women have had by trying to compare it to another's experience. I also acknowledge that it is risky to make general statements about either gender, but I believed I had to affirm the systemic oppression of women if I was to be sensitive to the difficulty that these ten women might have in speaking out.

I knew from listening to female friends and clients, but also from hearing the shadow in my own voice that it is very threatening for us women to say what we really think, what we really feel unless convinced that we are not going to be judged. The discourse of our gendered lives has taught many of us that our worth is dependent on what others think of us. We have felt compelled to consent rather than dissent, to doubt self rather than to trust self. This reality is not just hearsay or based on the rantings of a few radical women. The female voice crying out from the darkness has also found it's way into the scholarly literature. Crowley Jack (1991), in her book Silencing the Self, brought to life the voices of women suffering from chronic depression, and heard from those voices a strong connection between the depression and not feeling able to express who they felt they really were. Jordan, Surrey, and Kaplan (1983), and Stiver (1984), popular writers from the Stone Center at Weslesley College have written proliferously on the topic of women's self being defined in relation to other. The implication is that when that validating connection is lost, the voice gets lost. The Dance of Deception by Harriet Goldhor Lerner (1993), A Woman's Worth by Marianne Williamson (1993), and a discussion paper by Jack (1987) are additional documentations of women's tendency to deny their voice because of a real fear that it will not be listened to or believed. The impact of this silencing as it could affect my study was in realizing that when the internal experience had been strangled like this for so long, it might then be very difficult for the women to access it when there was opportunity to speak. With this in mind, I recognized that if the women were to feel encouraged in describing their experiences to me, it was essential, not only in my research approach but also in my personal approach, that they know they were being heard and respected.

In honoring women's experience, I also felt I needed to allow sufficient time for the women to reflect on that experience. Entry into the professional world has been relatively new for women, and thus it was reasonable to expect that, like me, these women would be in process, and that while they may feel they understood the question, it may tap knowledge that is difficult to articulate. This is aside from any fear of articulating it, as discussed above. The task for me was to gather the data in such a way as to allow sufficient time for the reflective process to occur. The richness of my data would probably depend on it. This might mean that the women would need time to be by themselves, in the absence of outside pressures nagging them to be meeting some other demand.

An additional concern, alluded to just above, was the physical reality of these women's lives--work demands and home responsibilities. This meant I had to be willing to go to them, when they were able to meet. It might also mean meeting at night, and anticipating sudden changes in plans. It might mean working around children and other household schedules.

Finally, remembering my own initial fears about revealing my doubts and vulnerabilities, and knowing about women's shame (Jordan, 1989) in revealing their inner stories, I didn't know whether the women would stay behind any walls they might have built up, or conversely, if they would be open to the invitation to share and to disclose. The possibility of the former meant that I would need to make every effort to build a level of trust that would make it safe enough to take down the wall.

Underlying all these considerations was the need for me to uphold the ethical principles of dignity, respect, and responsible caring defended by my affiliation as a professional psychologist (Canadian Psychological Association, 1988).

Choosing An Approach To Inquiry

Paradigm. The nature of my question seemed to lead me naturally toward the qualitative paradigm, because I wanted to understand women's experience rather than measure it. I wanted the study to be an experience of discovery rather than a proving of something I already suspected. At the end, I wanted to be able to describe a way of being instead of confirming or rejecting a hypothesis. These attributes--understanding, discovery, description--are considered the hallmarks of qualitative research (Eisner, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Together, I believed these hallmarks had the potential to capture the nature of the experience I was inquiring about.

Perhaps more specifically, I believed these hallmarks could attend to the complexity and totality of women's experience. I sensed that for too long the quantitative literature had segmentalized women's lives into compartments of being; i.e., behavioral as in talking incessantly, nagging, dieting; intellectual as in having a tendency toward the "softer" sciences (Kaschak, 1992), and that in fact women themselves may have followed this line of thinking in describing themselves. If I was to know how being professional had influenced the "whole" female experience, I needed to challenge that fragmented approach to understanding. My conviction in the importance of this shift was strengthened by reading some of the more contemporary writers on postmodern thinking (Denzin, 1984; Ellis, 1991a; Ellis, 1991b; Ferguson, 1989), who all insisted that an authentic study of human experience brought one as close as possible to all dimensions of that experience-physiological, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual--and that it recognized the complex intertwining of those dimensions. The authors argued that researchers had to go beyond the measurement of discrete units of experience if they were to represent all that any one situation might mean to an individual.

Building on this concept of wholeness versus discreteness, I believed qualitative inquiry also had the potential to attend to process. This was key to the nature of my question for two reasons. First, I was going to be asking the women to articulate an experience which as I discussed above, I suspected they would struggle finding an adequate language to describe. If their struggle was to be anything like mine in writing these first three chapters, I anticipated that there would be lots of spaces, lots of going back and forth trying to make sense out of what was being said, lots of hesitations and aberrations in mid-sentence. My approach had to allow for, even capture, the evolvement of this voice. It had to recognize that meaning would be constructed in these moments of hesitation and aberration, as the life stories were told (Witherall & Noddings, 1991).

Second, adopting the view that women's experience of pursuing a professional life might have passed through different stages and phases of meaning, I wanted to be able to follow that process rather than have to describe it through some type of categorical analysis. This latter point about the deficits of categorical analysis was reinforced through my reading of Ellis (1991a), Jackson (1989) and van Manen (1990). Jackson wrote forcefully of the need to avoid the mask of categorical description which kills the spirit in the desire to know. Van Manen has argued for an approach to research which does not "pulverize life into minute abstracted fragments" (p. 7).

Lastly, I believed the qualitative paradigm, with its emphasis on subjectivity, would allow me to hear about that which I wanted to know in a way that was legitimated through women's lived experience rather than through "masculinist reason and science" (Brown, 1991, p. 73; Davis, 1992). I wanted an approach that would allow a less structured and a more fluid window into the lifeworlds, or the "everyday existence" (Van Manen, 1990,

p. 11) of the women. I did not want to force separation of that existence which women have historically described as having many threads of being (Denzin, 1989). Knowing I would not be able to separate out my own subjective experience, the fluidity of the qualitative approach would invite the discourses I may wish to take in writing about narrated biographies that were in some ways autobiographical.

Methodology. Feeling very reassured that I had chosen the paradigm that was going to honor my inquiry as well as the women's experience, I believed the question itself was a phenomenological one in that it essentially was inquiring about what the experience of being a female professional was like (van Manen, 1990). It was an experience that was not to come directly from any set of facts that the women might list off to me and that I would go home and write about. Rather, my search was for the essence of that experience as it emerged out of "this" study of the particulars and instances that constituted the woman's everyday lived existence (van Manen, 1990). It was about being able to describe that essence in such a way as to offer a deep and truly unique insight into what the experience was actually like for these women. Because the self is generally not encountered in consciousness (Denzin, 1989), it was to be a search for meaning that could only be captured in retrospect.

I wanted to give that essence a frame for understanding. This did not mean that I wanted to in any way objectify what I was hearing, for to do so would be to erase the power of each woman's subjective experience (Richardson, 1988). Instead, it was my wish to interpret the expression of that essence in such a way as to give it life outside the immediate world of the individual woman. That life is articulated through the words we speak (Denzin, 1989). In this sense, the study also took on a heurmeneutic flavor where the systematic interpretation of text would offer possible meanings and themes in regard to the lifeworld experience. That is, it was phenomenological because it captured essence, and heurmeneutical because it was also attempted to interpret that essence (Van Manen, 1990).

Within this heurmeneutic-phenomenological approach, I believed that using semi-structured interviews would be a way of gathering the data that would honor the issues for women discussed above. Face-to-face contact seemed a most respectful way to listen to the women reconstruct their stories (Kohler-Riessman, 1990), and it provided an opportunity for both the woman and for me to reflect on and dialogue about what was being said. It was an approach that encouraged me to be "connected", both to my own process and to theirs, in my learning (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). As a listener, I could affirm the women's voices by feeding their words back to them. To refrain from influencing the description of their experience, the interviews would have to be as free and undirected as possible, with the flow still being focused enough to stay connected to the question I was wanting to have answered (Kvale, 1983). This meant that though I was cognizant of my wish to have the women address a minimum of two questions, that is, had being professional influenced decisions around bearing children, and had being professional influenced marital relationships, I only brought those questions up if they had not already been answered. My role was more to probe and clarify that which was brought up spontaneously by the women.

To provide that extra time for reflection that I discussed above, the original plan was to triangulate the data source by supplementing the interviews with an alternate medium; i.e., photography, journaling, art. All the women were invited to do this, although it was not made a condition for participating in the study. Three women did participate: one wrote a letter to her young daughter, passing on a legacy of strength and determination; one shared personal poems with me, written at times when she was able to reflect in a very intimate way with her inner experience; and a third quoted from a poster that hung in her home and that she thought described well her experience of forging her own path. The remaining seven chose not to participate in this part of the study. Although it could be indicative of the reality of their busy lives, of those seven women, only one said clearly it was because of a lack of time. While one other was going to give me excerpts from songs that helped describe her experience around the question, but in the end did not, the remaining five reported that they "could not think of anything" that would add to what they could say in the interviews.

Honoring my Own Experience

In addition to the recognition of systemic influence, and the choosing of a methodology which I believed could capture the essence of what I wanted to know, a third consideration that I knew I had to take into account in honoring women's experience was that I, also being a professional woman, had to honor my own process. I found this to be a very tight dance for somehow I had to "bracket" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) my biases while at the same time being drawn into lifeworlds which resonated with my own. It demanded that I stay very close to the women's words, that I spend a great deal of time reading and re-reading them, that I journal continuously to vent my own fears and sorrows which were being triggered by the women's words, and that I stay receptive to feedback which questioned potential biases. Sometimes I had to stop working on the study altogether because my own process screamed to take precedence. These were frustrating times because I would lose patience and become panicked about wanting to "get this thing done." Even as that part of me wanted to rush ahead, however, there was another part that would become seduced and drawn back by some new revelation in my understandings. It was like being pulled in two different directions, but I was beginning to see that it was in those pulled-back times, when I ceased "doing", when I came the closest to where I needed to go to learn about that which I sought to know. So in this part of the document, I want to honor my battle with a process which refused to let me control it, but which in the end taught me a great deal about myself.

At the same time as I explain how I struggled to keep my biases out of the analysis, I realized that that could only be done to a realistic extent. I told my advisor that it made no sense to me to write this document in anything other than the first person. I was excited then when she passed me a book called Investigating Subjectivity (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992), and as I read that, together with an article validating the collective experience of the writer and subject

(Richardson, 1988), I felt affirmed that this was, at least in a postmodern sense, a legitimate way to write. From these sources I read that I could make myself an "experimental subject and treat [my own] experience as primary data" (Jackson, 1989, p. 4). I did not have to pretend that I was an isolated self writing a story about which I had no knowledge. As I heard these new and "radical" messages, I can only describe my feeling inside as one of being opened, of feeling alive. I was being given permission to speak my own self into existence not only through the women's words, but by bringing in digressions toward my own reflections.

In a sense then, my writings herein represent a blending of multiple voices--theirs and mine, with my own representing both my child and adult experience. Our knowing was to be affirmed and deepened through our connection, mutuality and reciprocity (Witherall & Noddings, 1991). We were to journey together in a way that because of our common experience, would offer safety and authenticity. I understood that there was a difference between biasing and speaking my existence, and that it was, while I could let the women influence my process, it was not appropriate for me to influence theirs. There was a wonderful satisfaction, however, in knowing this difference and in realizing that I did not have to, in fact could not, keep my voice separate from a reality that was also my own. The reader will notice this strong parallel process between myself and the women in the following chapter where, in describing the thematic components of the road to self, I could not immediately separate my voice from theirs and write it in a different section.

These three issues--recognizing systemic influence, choosing a methodology which would validate and heighten the experiential component, and honoring my own subjective experience--all provided that frame for honoring women's experience that I sought. It was a frame which surpassed intellectual boundaries. It was a way to know that, as I had hoped, would recognize the dignity of women's process, including my own. It was to be a process, the depth of which even I could not have anticipated, for at times I felt I was looking into the shadows of my own soul.

The Women Who Offered Their Stories

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to talk about how I came to meet those ten women with whom I was to journey. This was not an easy task. I first had to decide how I would define "professional." This was a point of deliberation for while I was seeing it through my own preconceptions of some level of university training as well as some disciplined code of conduct, I realized some women in clerical and sales positions, for example, also saw themselves as professional. I did not deny this perspective. However, to resolve my indecision I simply acknowledged that there were both legal and social definitions of the word, and set limitations based on what I thought was closest to the kind of experience I wanted to know about. Perhaps I used myself as a reference point, but I decided that I was most interested in women whose professional pathway had involved both pursuance and utilization of some level of academic skill. My criteria were then that each woman would hold a university degree, and report to have made a full-time commitment to a career. It is noted that while these criteria did not in my mind "make" the woman a professional, it did give me a definition to begin with. I felt nervous about the definition, but in the absence of any alternative ones, I relied on my perhaps outdated notions of what being a professional meant.

A second criteria was that the women should belong to professions certified as such by the province of Alberta (Professions and Occupations Bureau, 1991). It is noted, however, that when I did start the search for my "co-participants" (Ellis, 1991a), either because of their ability to give rich data, or because I was beginning to have difficulty finding women who believed they could address the question, exceptions were made in terms of who was included. For example, out of the sixteen contacts I made, two did not wish to be interviewed, a main reason being that they felt they did not relate to the question. Four more were willing to participate, but in discussion we agreed that if I found others who understood the question more clearly, they would not participate. I did not interview those four women, but did notify them as to my decision. The exceptions that I included were the business manager, Jacklyn, and the professor, Anna, who, while holding degrees in their respective professions were presently working in positions not strictly to do with their degrees. In addition, the psychology intern, Casey, was several months away from obtaining her doctoral degree, and thus from being registered in the psychology profession. Nevertheless, it was clear to me that she was dedicated to her work and to the practice of psychology. Finally, one woman, Doris, did not hold a degree, but upon hearing pieces of her story I was excited about what she could offer to the study. Her commitment to her work was evident and she was therefore included as a participant.

Purposeful sampling was used to find the 10 women who did co-participate in the study (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992; Morse, 1989; Patton, 1990). This means that the women were selected by me for their ability to provide rich and in-depth information on the proposed question; that is, they could identify with the question, they had experiences around the question that they felt strongly about and could articulate, and they had sufficient time to commit to the study. Because the intent was to obtain a sample representing variation in professional women's experience (Patton, 1990), three different criteria were used: variance in the "type" of profession--from traditional male to traditional female; range in age and professional experience; and diversity in terms of marital and maternal status (see Figure 1 for details). Only the first two criteria were decided on before the data was gathered. After about the fifth interview, it became clear that the issues of voluntary childlessness and marital status needed to be discussed.

Contacts with the women were made: one through a professional organization, two through university faculties, one through a professional women's group, one through a newspaper article in which the woman had been interviewed and made her views known, and the remaining five through my own acquaintance. All were from the City of Edmonton. This focus on North American women does not suggest that they are the only group with experiences that need to be heard. Few relevant studies were found on professional women from other cultures, and although this would indicate an area of possible future study, it was not my purpose in this study to explore cultural differences. Perhaps it also needs to be stated here that the focus on women does not preclude the strong possibility that professional men also have meaningful and critical experiences to voice. The limitation to women is more indicative of the newness of the professional experience for women--and it was their experience I wanted to know about.

It is typical in a qualitative study to introduce in some detail those who took part in the study. I struggled with this dilemma for while I knew it would give the reader deeper insight into the lives of these women, I also believed revealing any great amount about their lives could expose their identity. Some held positions that would make them quite readily identifiable. Ethically, the confidentiality of the co-participants took priority, but I have provided a minimal description, with their names changed, for purposes of discussion in the themes.

Insert Table 1 about here

These are the women that the reader will meet in the ensuing pages. They are women whom I deeply appreciate for in their willingness to disclose and take down their walls, I have been able to hear that essence of what I was seeking to know. Before I move into the themes describing that essence, however, I need first to explain how the data was actually gathered and analyzed.

Table 1

Description of Co-participants by Pseudonym, Profession, Age, Professional Experience, Marital and Maternal Status

Pseudonym	Profession	Age	Experience in Years	Marital/Maternal Status
Kathy	Lawyer	43	20	Married/1 Child
Anna	Lawyer/ Professor	45	17	Divorced/No Children
Peg	Physician	39	7	Married/3 Children
Jacklyn	Engineer/ Bus. Mngr	37	15	Single/No Children
Maggie	Teacher	62	42	Divorced/3 Children
Doris	Volunteer Agency Dir	63	45	Remarried/2 Children
Angela	Social Serv. Wrkr	26	1	Single/No Children
Katie	Nurse/ Professor	52	30	Single/No Children
Kassandra	Teacher	33	10	Married/No Children
Casey	Psychology Intern	41	13	Remarried/ No Children

Steps in Conducting the Inquiry

Interviewing process. Beginning with the first interview, the purpose of the inquiry was explained, the consent form signed (see Appendix A for consent form), the researcher's interest in the topic explained, and the participant was invited to talk about what came to mind when she reflected on the question. Some probing questions were asked, but the aim was to let a process happen without undue interference from me. Each woman was interviewed twice for approximately one-and-a-half hours each time. After the first interview, the transcript was sent back to the woman with a letter (see Appendix B for letter) asking her to clarify, erase, or add to any parts that she felt would further explain her experience around the question. It was explained that the purpose of the second interview was both to give her a chance to validate her earlier statements, and for me to ask more in-depth questions about issues covered in the first contact (first credibility check). Attached to this transcript but in a separate envelope was a more personal note affirming again what I had heard them say, and thanking them for their willingness to share their experiences with other professional women.

At all times during the study, I kept notes in journal format, including my insights and observations. The process undertaken to name the emerging themes was also documented. This added to the dependability and confirmability of the research. All interviews were audio-taped (second credibility check).

Coming to understandings. My interpretation of the data was driven by my question of how being professional influenced life as a female. However, there were really two distinct phases to this step in my research process. Although I had known intellectually that I should be attuned to process and connectedness in the women's stories, in retrospect, I now believe that in the first stage of my analysis I had forgotten that importance of process, or somehow been unable to implement what I knew. I think the difference between my approach in the two stages was indicative of phases in my own personal growth and awareness.

The first phase was initiated by compiling the transcript as well as all other data on that participant into a case record. Segments of the interview which appeared to have significance were selected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and paraphrased into a transitory step to interpretation (see Appendix C, Tables C-1 to C-3, for a detailed example of the this phase of the coding process, based on interviews with participant "Anna"). At this point, the record was descriptive only; that is, it included descriptions of Anna's experience that related to the research question. The process of interpretation began with the categorization of these segments into first level codes (e.g., Coming to Terms), often more than one code per segment. The paraphrasing and first level codes were checked by two independent colleagues for five of the interviews (third credibility check). This proved to be a very useful process for it not only gave me assurance that what categories I had proposed were reasonable, but it also brought additional, significant segments out of the interviews that I had missed. Then, in a second level of coding, codes having some commonalty were grouped and given a category name (e.g., Empowerment). Each category was defined by descriptors for comparison in adding segments that might fit from succeeding interviews.

New segments from additional interviews were then continually related back to these descriptors to assess the degree of likeness, with new categories being developed where necessary and previous category names being revised (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this way, the collection and analysis of the data converged into a simultaneous process as additional interviews were done. The categories were sorted for similarity again and combined under the more encompassing "first-try" themes of the study (e.g., Future Orientations). Van Manen (1990) has defined theme as "the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" (p. 87). In other words, it is a way of discovering that essence underlying or coming out of the description that is given by the co-participant. These original themes were continually refined and revised until such time as the data was saturated, and redundancy in answering the questions became apparent. In hindsight, I probably thought the redundancy was evident after about six or seven interviews, but I was haunted by another voice which said ten would look more credible for publication purposes. The Text Base Alpha computer program (Qualitative Research Management, 1989) was used to keep track of the coded segments, and to facilitate retrieval and further review. While this did not necessarily save a lot of time, it did make my process "neater."

It was at this point that I felt a whole other process began to "emerge" for me. I remember the time with a sense of heaviness, with deep-rooted pain, with grief for a part of me that I had continued to evade. I also remember it as an image of an ember glowing brighter and brighter in the midst of the dark. I don't know if it is important to give this process a beginning, because I believe it began a long time ago. But there were gifts that came into my life that began to propel me toward a different way of being. One gift was given to me by my advisor when she handed me back my first draft, saying that she still did not know the essence of the women's experience, nor did she understand anything of my experience, both leading up to and during the study. At first I was confused and I truly did not understand what she was asking of me. It was like there was a veil of fog through which I could not see. It was a veil I couldn't seem to grasp either, for the more I tried to "think" my way through it, the farther it retreated. I remained in my confused mind until I was presented with other gifts that with each one, brought more light out of the embers, creating a deeper understanding of what my inquiry was really about.

> On another of these gifts, I wrote in my diary: I sat in the doctor's office today, trying not to hear what she was telling me... 'You're starting to enter menopause'. Tears sprang up inside me, from a place I didn't know. I felt so confused. My head bowed, my arms went around my breasts as the tears flowed down my face, tears that I was afraid of and did not welcome. I mumbled my confusion about this thief, heard far-away replies, left the office. In my car, I screamed at God for taking away before I had time to decide. I cursed at a system that had not told me that I must decide. I wept...I weep...

The veil lifted a little more, and I began to re-know a part of me that I had really known all along, but in a new way. While wanting to honor my denials and repressions as my way of coping, I also began to feel resentment at all the systems that I felt had contributed to me staying in the safety of my mind. This experience, in addition to finding and reclaiming my little girl's spirit again by being in therapy myself, shook my very sense of self, and I was gradually able to shift my safety zone from my mind to my soul, from the external to the internal. It was literally like being transplanted from a desert into an interior lushness. Healing of my alienation from a God that accepted me unconditionally seemed the final key that gave me the sense of confidence and worth to integrate and honor all that God had created in me.

Claiming these gifts, and the unexpected safety they brought, it was like I could now trust that looking inside could bring life rather than shame and devastation. I realized that in my initial attempts to analyze the women's stories, I had fractured those stories by filtering then through the brokenness of my own experience. I then, with a sense of new eagerness, re-visited the women's lives by reading their words again, this time listening, being open to these women's souls, hearing and connecting with my intellect but as well, with my soul. I reviewed my earlier process and attempted to keep reducing that process to a higher level of abstraction. By doing so, I was able to identify themes which I knew were richer, but I need to say that this shift was very difficult for me. I had to challenge a whole way of being that had been drilled into my existence.

I knew I had to do something, go somewhere to feed that desire to be open to what I was reading and hearing.

Nature had always represented a haven for me, a place to be quiet and to feel connected. So I went to photography, to the mountains, to music that helped me transcend just my own experience. I also went back to nine of the women again to confirm the messages I thought I was beginning to hear. I finally began to understand what my advisor meant when she said, "it has to live"! I have illustrated in Appendix C, Table C-4, how I worked through this new level of understanding to make the women's stories come to life.

Thus was the frame under which I was to re-search the essence of professional women's experience as it related to their femaleness. I have shared openly of the many ways in which my experience was woven into the shaping of this re-search. As a final note here, however, I feel it is also necessary to articulate more specifically how I would answer the question for myself. What you will read here, however, is limited to what I understood before actually working with the data. In this sense, they are my preunderstandings. They need to be documented so that you the reader can know not just about my growth which I will describe in the closing epilogue, but also for the purpose of laying out where I was coming from in my own initial understanding of the question. This excerpt is taken from my journals.

My Reality

When I began the conception of this study one-and-a-half years ago, 'confusion' is the best word to use to describe how I felt about my professional status. I believed it had given me esteem, but the searching and the experiences that led me to the study suggested to me that it might be a false sense of esteem. I felt it would give me equality and make me a whole person, but I began to see that those virtues must first come from within myself. I felt it would bring out the best in me, and in some ways it did. It honed my intellectual skills; it brought me into what I believed was the center of scientific knowledge; it enabled me to speak with authority on topics I had studied. Those are qualities more typically defined as male-related. Yet, those rewards came at a high cost to a part of me that I learned was not accepted by the professional world as that world then existed for me. I have grown in my conviction that that part was my feminine, a mode of being that was considered weak, inappropriate, ineffectual, unwanted.

Included in my sense of femaleness are all the roles that bring me into connection and relationship with others. When one puts blinders on and learns not to see anything else, or listen to other signs; e.g., body signs like depression, one becomes very closed and protective of that one road which they believe can be the only road to approval, acceptance. It seems that when I barricaded my needs to be vulnerable, to be connected and intimate with others, that when my need to prove my independence became stronger than my need to be nurtured, I lost all the benefits that can come with being vulnerable, being nurtured. I had learned well that those qualities were not acceptable, so how could I let friends, partners, or colleagues see those parts of who I really was. Marriage became of lesser priority. It was almost like I planted all carrots in my garden because they would be good for me, and never mind the flowers because they were frivolous and would be of no 'real' use.

Do I want to be connected with children? When I was playing as a child with Sarah, I believe having children was part of my dream. Sometime around my early university years, however, perhaps in the devastation of nursing school, I did let this dream go. I 'learned' that nurturing was not so honorable, and children may have gotten lumped in there. That remained the case until the incident in the doctor's

> office when I was confronted with the impending inability to make a final choice. I grieve now, not only for this possible loss, but for my innocent acceptance of a way of being that did not value this choice. I cannot at this time in my journey clearly say how I feel about children, but it is apparent to me that the rigidity of the professional machinery in my life had a major influence in cutting me off from my feelings around this.
>
> The painful part of my reality now is that when I begin taking the blinders off, I feel very alone for I have not taken anyone along on my journey. I am beginning to reconnect, and to feel whole once again, but I live yet in a world that I fear will never truly value my femaleness. It is like standing alone on the crest of a hill, braving the wind, seeing others trying to find their way toward me and I toward them, feeling the safety of getting closer, but having to endure winds that still bring tears to my eyes.

As I began to move about on the hill, I found those other ten brave souls who had agreed to journey along with me. I share now the themes that emerged from my conversations with them.

RE-DISCOVERING SELF THROUGH BECOMING INTERNALLY DEFINED, THROUGH BEING

Sketch of The Road

My meetings with the ten women on the hill were for brief moments in time. Yet, these women told of a journey that travelled through time, that cycled and flowed back on itself, that moved through seasons of discovery and growth to reach higher plateaus of meaning. This does not mean that earlier places on the road were not meaningful; rather, there was an overriding feeling that progression on the road was moving them toward a more complete form of existence. It was a search for a place to belong, for a way of being that felt whole, connected, and honored. Such a place was realized as the women shifted their focus from being externally defined to being internally defined, from doing to being. These two phenomena--the move toward internal definition and the emphasis on being--represent that overriding essence that emerged from the inquiry.

As I listened to the unfolding and shaping of this essence, and opened my self up to what it might be telling me, I felt I was taken on a journey, one which led toward a way of being where the feminine and the professional could co-exist. The journey appeared to consist of four main places, which I have encapsulated into the four themes of the study: Being Told Who I Can

Be, Not Knowing Who To Be, Fighting For Who I Am, and Growing In Who I Am.

In regard to the first theme, "Being Told Who I Can Be", with no initial prompting from me, the women took me back to their childhood and spoke of a time when they were told they could "do" anything they wanted to do. Yet, it was also a time that rooted them in a world that defined what that could really mean for women. They spoke of feeling the sting of stereotypes which defined what it meant to be a girl, of seeing those stereotypes played out in the lives of women around them. They described the beginnings of entrenchment in a system that taught them it was more important to meet the needs of others than of self.

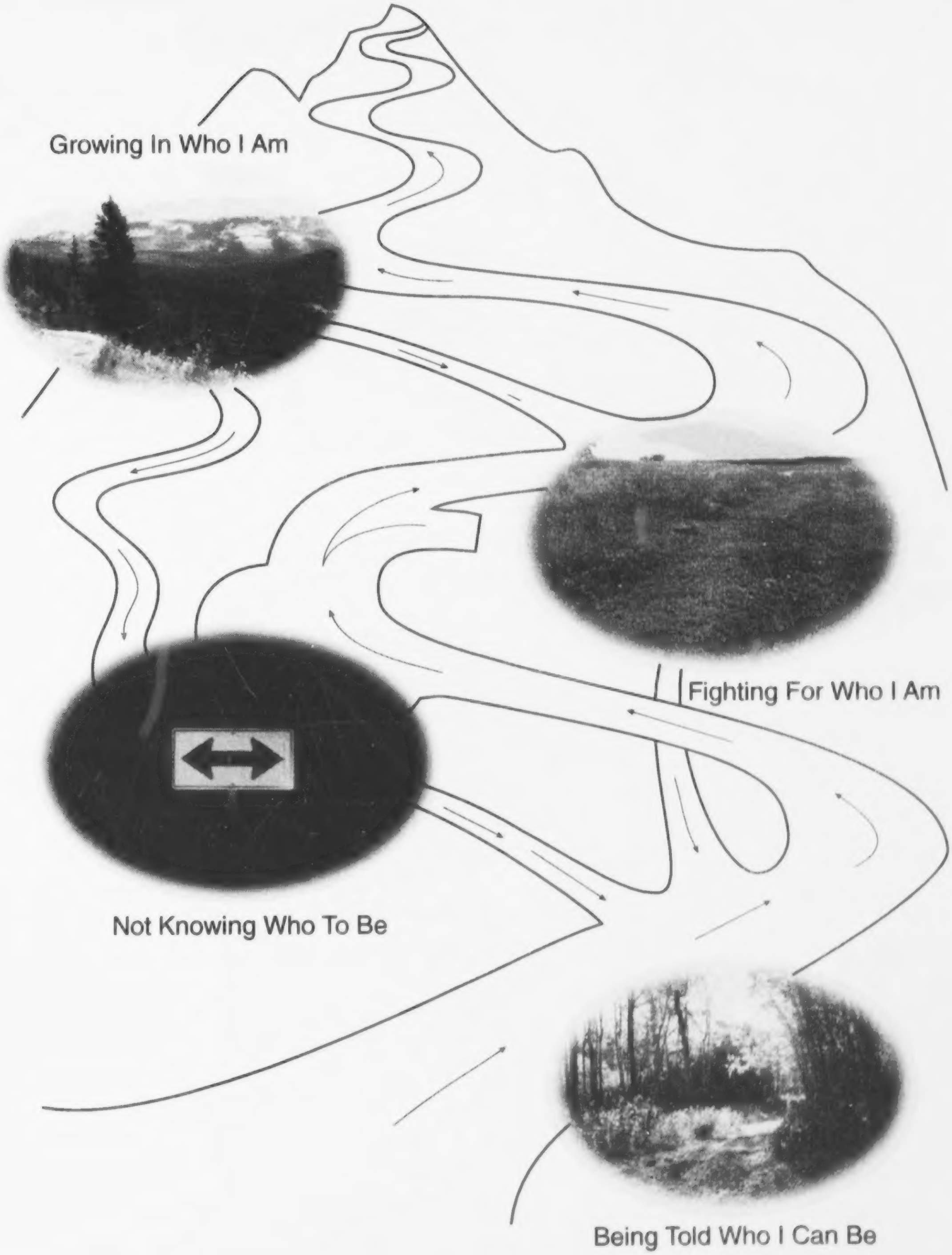
This dissonance between who they knew they were and who they thought others expected them to be set them on a life-long struggle to meet the requirements of both, and they talked about how just surviving at times meant splitting self into pieces that fit here and not there, that were valued here and not there. Recognizing the emphasis on the male norm, a standard reinforced by the professional world, the splitting often included denial of their feminine nature, and thus denial of an integral part of who they were. They described this as a time of "Not Knowing Who To Be."

It was not until they reclaimed their feminine, and fought to exercise it's power ("Fighting For Who I Am") that they were able to reject what they knew did not fit for them, and turn instead toward a way of being which felt integrated and whole. This often meant painful separations and confrontations, the cost of which was weighed against the need to survive. It was in those painful times of transition, however, when they remembered the importance of being still and listening to the wisdom of their inner lifeworld. It was a wisdom that impelled them to reshape and redefine their professional lives in ways that kept them connected to their wholeness. It was a time to "Grow In Who I Am."

The themes could be described as successive, but the women clearly stated that because of the loops and folding back of their process, they may at times have had to revisit old places as new experiences of self were claimed and added to the journey. To assist the reader in understanding the process, I have attempted to represent that process artistically in Figure 1. In addition, to help the reader understand the contribution each thematic description made to answering the question, I end each theme with a section entitled "Reflections on The Question."

To help shape the themes, and to make the women's experience come alive in the body of the reader, I have used the metaphor of roads and light. In particular, from a number of images suggested by the women, I chose the metaphor of roads because in my mind it represented movement, a bridging of places. In many African cultures, the image of road is often used to describe pathways in the body, such as the blood flow, respiratory flow, with any obstruction in such flow simply meaning the person cannot grow, cannot live (Jackson, 1989). This image of movement toward sustenance and life fits with the following stories as narrated by the women I met. I begin where the women took me, in childhood, and speak in the present experience as I am taken through it. Again, I prepare the reader for the intermingling of my voice with the women's, for it did not feel respectful of myself to try to write my voice in a separate space.

Figure 1. *The Road As Illustrated Through Artistic Means.*


Growing In Who I Am
Fighting For Who I Am
Not Knowing Who To Be
Being Told Who I Can Be

Being Told Who I Can Be

"I did not know then how to know what I knew."

- Jan Borene (cited in Hazeldon Educational Materials, 1992).

By R.F. Jevne

There is a sense of trust and innocence with which a girl child begins her journey on this road. She is born to parents who perhaps want for her all the advantages they did not have. The world is placed at her feet and she is led to believe that there will be few limitations on who she can turn out to be. She believes in this promise, and strolls along a wide road, surrounded by beauty and warmed by the glow of the sun. As she grows and moves further along this road, however, she notices shadows and has a sense that she is encountering forces that threaten to ensnare her and cut her off from reaching her dreams. She does not understand where the shadows come from or what their intention is with her, but her instinct tells her that she needs to be wary.

This is a portrait of where all ten of the women took me in beginning to describe the impact being professional has had on their femaleness. Though going back to childhood might at first seem removed from adult professional life, I sensed that there was a compelling need for them to do so before they could begin to understand the confusion and ambivalence they experience later in life. I'm not sure that at the beginning of the study they were consciously aware of why they needed to travel back, but as the process developed, I believe they, as well as I, began to see that the wounds to their feminine were interconnected somehow with experiences that were rooted in their childhood. These wounds in turn were possibly connected to the ferociousness with which they pursued their professional dreams. In other words, there appeared to be a connection here between the wounded feminine and the single-mindedness of the professional pursuit, and while it did not answer my question neatly, it offered a depth that beckoned to be explored.

It would appear that awareness of the wide open passage came first from loving parents who, perhaps knowing of the female disadvantage, nevertheless hoped that their little girls would be the women to rise above those restrictions. They endeavored to bestow in their daughters a boldness that said they could "do" anything they wanted to do. Maggie and Kathy, respectively, spoke of hearing this message from a very early age:

> As far as this business about being a feminist, I think I grew up with one and that was my father...There was an expectation in our family that of course you can do this, anybody can do this--not just girls or not just boys...Be polite and know how to serve tea and know how to go to the Ladies Institute and say all the right things--but in addition to that, we also had to know how to express ourselves, how to articulate ideas, how to go hunting!

> I had been raised to that point to be a person, not a woman...For my birthday or Christmas about that time, grandpa gave me some law books--the high school law text, a biography of a famous American lawyer, and another I've forgotten.

Angela confirmed that this had also been her experience:

> My dad created the sense of independence as well. He raised all of us, particularly us girls, not to depend on someone to support you. You know, to do things that you want to do for yourself...I've always had pretty much every opportunity; I haven't had any limits.

As did Kassandra:

> I didn't get stuck in the kitchen or whatever doing those things solely with my mom...I felt I had the choice to choose whatever I wanted to do...If I wanted to be at home with kids, that was okay. If I wanted to be an astronaut or whatever, that was okay too as long as I did the best I could do at whatever I chose...I have been more or less free to develop as a person, not a female.

How strong and confident one can imagine these young spirits to have been. Though they were carrying a torch from previous generations of brave and stalwart women, it must have been indeed promising for both themselves and their parents to see their daughters grasp that flame and bring it forward to light even bigger dreams. It was a celebration that women had aspired to for many generations--a celebration of freedom and equality!

This sunny road seems to remain relatively peaceful and unimpeded for some time, perhaps until around adolescence or young adulthood, where the women took me next. They told me then of the rising of the shadows (a metaphor offered and affirmed by the nine women re-visited), shadows which skirted about them, taunting their perfect world of hopes and dreams, raising doubts and questions about what they really could or should do. The shadows were elusive, not tangible, but were potent agents of a system that had very rigid ideas about the worth and proper place of females. I can picture the young girl on this passage, sensing the shadows, suspended by not knowing how to react to them and having nobody to explain them to her. From a feminist standpoint, one might vent rage on that system for forcing a code of being that protects its claim to power at the expense of another's. As anthropologists, sociologists or other systemic thinkers, one might try to understand her circumstance by thinking along the lines of division of roles or generational transference. However one might choose to explain this unjust occurrence, the reality that this young girl spoke of is a feeling that something inside of her was beginning to be violated.

What are the shadows? There were three general ways in which the women spoke of them: external definitions of femaleness, a tenacious resolve not to live the dependent lives that they observed other women to live, and a code of expectations that placed them on a course that led them more toward pleasing others than toward any honoring of themselves, including their femaleness.

External definitions of femaleness. With regard to the first, external definitions of femaleness, the women talked of how they felt defined by: the roles they performed, by how their bodies looked, by societal rules which dictated what was an "appropriate" way for females to speak. There was a sense of being owned or bought by "other", and there were very strict and well reinforced consequences in place to discipline the young girl into acceptance of those external standards. In terms of definition by role, Kathy told of feeling that her femaleness was captured only in terms of how she functioned as a partner, as a mother, as a lover:

> We define ourselves in relationship to men:
> we define ourselves in relationship to children

> ...It gets defined, I suppose, in terms of sexual relations with men--whether sex is good, whether sex is bad, and that sense of sexual pleasure of being a woman, of having your physiological confirmations that you are a woman...I wouldn't think that I really had any positive kinds of experiences of seeing myself as a woman until I had the physical experience of having a baby.

Anna confirmed that the message about what roles were appropriate for females was just as powerful and rooted for her. She spoke of the "two roles, wife and mother, that we learn about that make us girls--women do these things...the social forces are so strong that you can be absolutely sucked in." For both Kathy and Anna, there is little sense that their femaleness could exist outside of these roles. It was perhaps like being force-fed a belief system that threatened to automate what their existence as females could be.

The hold of that belief system, and the reach of it's damage is evident in the following words spoken by Jacklyn and Kathy. These women described a second way in which their femaleness was externally defined--a way which put their physical bodies under the microscopic eye of cultural stereotype and found those bodies lacking. My sense is that for both women, this was a very painful part of their early life experience, as it may remain still. Jacklyn's feeling of alienation is palpitable as she talked with her tongue in her cheek and her eyes directed away from me:

> I never quite fit in, in some respects, to the

> normal stages and steps of adolescence. So I was a little bit of a misfit, not in a behavioral sense but just in a physical sense, which sort of set me aside...people still like you to fit a certain norm...men particularly like you to fit within the norm of beauty.

Kathy's sense of rejection was equally strong:

> When you started to date...that was when you were defined as whether you were an attractive girl or not...whether you were popular--those were the two things...and since neither of those were particularly successful comparisons for me, I tended to skirt them as well. So, my definition of myself as a woman really never emerged very clearly in any stage in my life--and still hasn't.

As I read these words over and over again, I am brought back into my own memories of what it was like to be an adolescent, of how much I wanted to be accepted. While I as an early developer had no trouble fitting in with what a girl was supposed to look like, on the other hand I remember that same sense of feeling different because of the attention that my mature body attracted. I can empathize with just how deep those hurts must have gone for Jacklyn and Kathy. Being at a stage where their sense of identity was just being formed and where they would have felt real discomfort with their differentness, it would make sense that they might question if there was something inherently wrong with them. Since their differentness was directly connected to their femaleness, it would also make sense that they would be tempted to believe that somehow a part of them was being or had to be rejected.

For Doris, while she didn't specifically say, as Jacklyn and Kathy had, that she felt she didn't fit the ideal female body image, the message seemed to be the same. In a voice softened perhaps by regret, she did express her sadness that her "femininity was something that was told--the message there was that it was very exterior...how I looked, how I behaved...I had no idea of an interior femininity." Perhaps she felt that same external judgement that I, Kathy and Jacklyn felt. In essence, I think that for many women, femaleness was what could be seen or physiologically manifested, and there was then the loss of what else it could have meant. The shadows have begun their toxic work, and there is a feeling that something is dying, is being suffocated.

It was a suffocation that was to be strengthened in yet a third way which Maggie spoke of--through strong "public censure" of what girls could say:

> I would berate myself for not having seen ahead of time how it was going to be, because I was living in a double path--there was a dichotomy there. On the one hand I was doing what I thought human beings, what other persons should do. On the other hand, I was being told that girls didn't do this and didn't do that, and there was an awful lot of 'they didn't do this' and 'you shouldn't do that', and I would not know ahead of time what I should and shouldn't do because nobody'd ever told me.

It's almost like the shadows are coaxing or trying to push her into a box that doesn't fit, that is not big enough for all of her to be in. Going back to the little girl on the passage, one could imagine that at first when she begins to hear the messages, that she might just turn around to notice them, but keep walking on by. She has no frame for understanding what they mean. Yet, as she hears the taunts again and again, they begin to take root in her being.

These external voices about roles, body image, and feminine language are a potent shadow haunting the young girl on the road, and perhaps like I had, she begins to forget how else to define who she is. The impact of that voice, however, is probably exacerbated even further by another shadow which she now begins to notice and feel.

Dissonance between what I am told and what I see. This dissonance about the potential of females is the second shadow the girl notices clouding her childhood road. She sees what is happening in the lives of other women around her--often her mother--and finds it does not fit with what her parents told her in childhood. When she witnesses this lack of value--relative to that which she sees her father as holding--one can imagine her saying to herself, "maybe it's true--maybe females are somehow less than men"! On the road, she hesitates more, and pays closer attention to what the shadows whisper. She decides this will not be her life, and she swears to make it different for herself. Kathy shared this from her experience:

> As a small child I didn't want to be a girl; I wanted to be a boy...I wanted my brother's life, not mine. I wanted my brother's future, not mine. I didn't want to end up in a house like my mother, essentially imprisioned...I liked being with my father. I liked his attitude toward life better; he seemed more relaxed. I liked to be with men when they were talking, as opposed to listening to my mother's friends talk. There seemed to be more substance to it.

Angela also felt a need to break from a pattern she saw her mother live:

> My mother is very happy and has a good marriage, but I didn't want to be like my mom. I didn't want to be staying home raising a family. She did a wonderful job, but I wanted to be more self-reliant. With my dad...you know, self esteem and sense of identity. I wanted that for myself.

For a third woman, Kassandra, while she welcomed the role model that her mother provided, she just had to go back a generation to find an example of a way of being that she didn't want for herself. She spoke of her admiration for her mother:

> In lots of ways she is traditional in terms of she's a fabulous cook, and she's the nurturing, caring, thoughtful, kind of person, those kind of attributes that I would associate more with femaleness. But because she was a working mom and had pursued her own interests and her own friends outside of her married relationship, I would have to say that she is a model for me.

At the same time, she was sensitive to how both her mother and her grandmother had not necessarily been affirmed for their efforts. She spoke of "[not seeing] my mom affirmed by my dad", but it was about her grandmother that she voiced, "I guess I really feel very different from my grandmother in that I want to feel I have worth."

For Doris the double message was not limited to the discrepancies she saw, but was also part of what her parents said in conjunction with that "assurance" that she could do whatever she wanted. She reflected sadly on a potential that was dangled before her eyes only to be snatched away again for reasons that robbed her of the chance to become more acquainted with what her dream as a young woman might have been:

> I got this double message all through my growing up, that I could do a lot of things...I could be a lawyer, a doctor, anything that I wanted to be, but men don't like clever girls so there's no way that you are going to university. You're going to be a shorthand-typist, and I never argued with that...that was just accepted because I didn't know that I wanted to be anything else. To me, being a stenographer was great, you know?

Her parents' words gave lip-service to a growing norm, but for perhaps their own reasons, they did not seem able to ascribe to it. It is interesting to note that Doris did not enter university, and though she still feels she did some of what she wanted in being part of a youth Zionist movement, and later having a family and establishing her own business, even today, she feels the loss of that chance for higher education.

I keep thinking about what that little girl on the road must be feeling now. My sense is that it must be becoming more and more apparent to her that things are maybe not all what she and her parents had hoped for. But she still does not have the experience nor intellectual capacity to make sense of what she is hearing and seeing. So maybe she stops walking; maybe she looks behind in confusion; maybe she carries on, trying not to pay too much heed to something she does not fully understand. Her confusion is only heightened, however, as she encounters yet a third shadow.

Satisfying the expectations of other. Now her attention is further drawn from that sunny road as the external voice gathers strength in its intent to sear her worth within the expectations of other. This shadow may coincide with messages from the other two shadows--that her femaleness is externally defined, that there is dissonance between what she is told and what she sees--but here the taunt about the source of her value is reinforced. She internalizes the message that her worth is determined by how well she meets the external expectations, and embarks on a self-sacrificing spiral to ensure that she does indeed satisfy those demands. This would not be difficult to understand considering that she has not properly being taught the value of her inner self. Anna talked about feeling this strong need to meet other's standards:

> I don't have to be the best, but I would feel really terrible if anybody out there, people I know, people I don't know, thought I wasn't trying to do my best. That seems to be something that's a really driving need. I don't know what people would say about it psychologically, but I think that's quite present; it always

> has been.

Angela and Maggie's comments, respectively, suggest that family dynamics may play a role:

> I remember bringing home report cards and doing really well, and they'd say, oh, you need to bring up your math mark, you know, and I'd go, okay. Like, you know, I've done well in everything else. You know, accentuate the positive and not the negative. And, you know, stuff like that used to really bother me.

> I know he would have much preferred had I been a boy, but I wasn't and it didn't really bother me. I never felt, I wish I were male. I don't even remember thinking that, but I knew he was kind of disappointed, but it was okay as long as I got high marks and did all the things I should. So I grew up 'shoulding' all over myself.

Doris also spoke tearfully of a similar experience with her father where, believing that he had wished she had been a boy, she felt a need to earn extra approval:

> When my brother was born [my father] would hand around the cigars to all the people he worked with, but when his daughter was born, 'Oh, I had a daughter'...I was more trustworthy than my brother because he was such a dreamer...I was more of the active one, the friendly one, and I could be relied on to do a lot of things.

It was a hunger for acceptance that she was to take into her adult life as she struggled to meet differing sets of demands--her own and those of society:

> I had a lot of anxiety. There was a tremendous thing about being liked...and there was also a great need to be judged and to have an identity of what I do, and what I do became who I am. And at the same time, [please] like me as a nice sweet placating young girl.

Finally, a most insightful comment was made by Katie when she said, "I have never felt good enough." In responding to my paraphrase as to whether she was saying pursuing her education was a way to prove she was good enough, she answered, "yes, yes"! How well I personally know that hurt and desperation that comes with feeling that there is something I must "do" to save my self, and not remembering what that is, or feeling that it might not make a difference anyway. For me, it is a feeling that poisons my soul and rots my feet so that I am left either motionless, or running on stumps that have no real grounding.

There was one woman who, while the end result was the same in that her female identity was rigidified, did not even have the initial boost of support from her parents. Interestingly enough, she did go on to become a physician. Peg spoke of the anguish caused by parental guidance which while possibly well-intentioned, nevertheless threatened to cut her off from a profession that was very much a part of who she was:

> My father was a doctor...and quite a well-known figure...I wanted to apply for medicine when I was 19 and he told me not to. When I did apply and was accepted in my late 20's, he on both occasions told me it was no place for a woman. The first time he really implied that I would have a choice of getting married, having children, having some sort of full personal life, or I would go into medicine and have a full professional life but be an old maid ...if you were a woman in medicine, you

> were married to the profession and you didn't have a chance to have any kind of meaningful personal life, or you were the sort of person that had to be so dog-eared to make it in a man's world that you ended rubbing people the wrong way and never really having the chance to express yourself as a woman...I was devastated...that I might not get married--I don't think that meant a lot to me--but that I might not be able to express myself as a woman--I couldn't figure out who else to be.

As I listen to this story, I feel for the no-win situation which Peg must have felt she was in. To her, being a female and a doctor were not exclusive; rather, they were collaborating parts of her existence. It must have seemed like being given a choice that left one stranded in the middle.

Maybe Peg did not have exactly the same kind of experience of the three shadows as did the other eight women who spoke to this theme. However, one thing that they all had in common was the memory of being quite alone as a young girl. Perhaps like myself, they may have had friends, they had their families, the road was probably even happy at many times, but there was also a feeling that they were not understood. Some painful reminders were shared as Peg reminisced about how "there were not many on [the road with me]." Jacklyn, whose different body shape did not allow her to feel she belonged, talked of that feeling of exclusion:

> I didn't fit the mold in terms of physical presence or femaleness. So I struggled a lot with that when I was an adolescent, and as a result I never really had any boyfriends...

> [You are] a little bit more sensitive to being on the outside.

Maggie talked about her "sadness more than anything, Colleen. I don't remember anger as much as I remember being--knowing I was different." She recalled "when I was young...I couldn't say what I thought or I'd be put down. I mean there was no acceptance of my differentness and my different ideas."

Memories of not being accepted, of sadness--these are powerful images from a past that maybe the women hadn't allowed themselves to remember in some time. Yes, there was sunshine and happiness too, but there was also the restraint of the shadows. While one is left with the impression that the young girl is still on the road, and feeling fairly content as she travels along, there is a sense that she is already beginning to feel weight--of what she is not yet sure.

Reflections on the question. It is not my intention in this study to try to uncover all the reasons why these women may feel their anxieties. It is reasonable to expect that there may have been other dynamics that influenced their growing lack of confidence in themselves. It is also probable that there may have been other factors which influenced their sense of femaleness other than the three that they could articulate to me in three hours. However, one cannot dismiss these very potent beginnings which speak to the struggle between what is felt inside and what is expected outside. Therefore, it seems important to me to reflect on what significance these early learnings may have had on the experience I am inquiring about.

Perhaps I can pose such a potential impact in the form of two questions that are stirring in my mind at this point. One question that I believe begins to be asked here is, what are the implications of the women saying they had been raised with a stronger sense of their individuality than of their femaleness? One possibility, and the one most of us might be drawn to, is that the parents were just being very conscious of avoiding stereotypes and of trying to break patterns of childrearing that were dictated more by the status quo than by any sense of individual talent. Another possibility is that while few limitations were placed on the young girls, at the same time, maybe the parents as well as society did not know how to value the feminine equally; that is, it was not given "enough" attention outside the prescribed roles traditionally assigned to women. I need to say that none of the women spoke to this directly in the interviews, but from my journal notes I take this:

> I don't know if I can put my finger on it, but I felt somehow today that when _________ was talking about her being more androgynous, she might really have been saying she had never been taught about being female, that that part of her had not been brought out. This is not

> the first time I have felt this way. I also remember having that sense last month when I interviewed _____________ and __________.

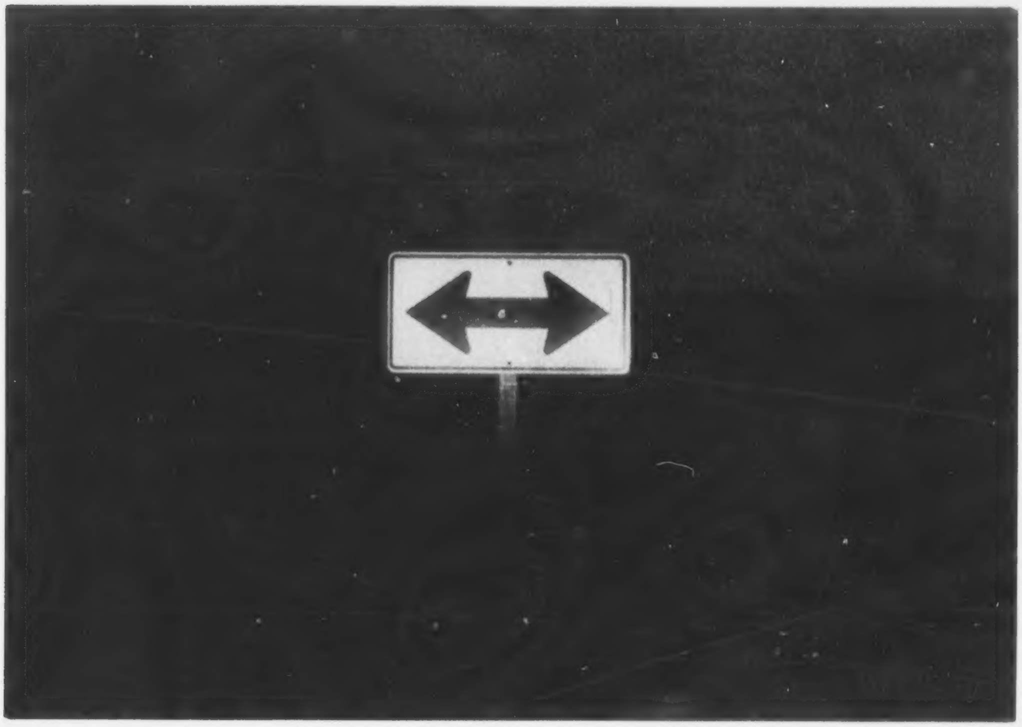
Although this is based only on my intuition, I believe it does pose a reasonable possibility.

The second question I have is, how does knowing about this early beginning for these professional women help answer the research question of how being professional has influenced our lives as females? One point that stands out is that the attitude of professionalism, as it has been generally understood--excelling in tasks, doing one's best--has it's roots in childhood. This suggests an early emphasis on "doing" versus "being." Another point is that while there were promising messages that these girls could succeed, quite possibly it was to be by standards that were not of their own creation. Lastly, it begins to paint a picture of a young girl who perhaps for the rest of her life will be confused about who she really is or can be, who will have to fight to claim that sense of self. This is not unlike the place where the women began to take me next as they continued to speak the words that would allow me to bring our collective stories to life.

Not Knowing Who To Be

"I had internalized society's unserious estimate of all that was female - including myself."

- Gloria Steinem (cited in Hazeldon Educational Materials, 1992)
American feminist writer



By H. Sund

The road begins to become cluttered, and there is a sense of narrowing. It becomes more difficult to keep sight of the road for something keeps getting in the way. There is restriction and the young woman feels anger and betrayal because she has not expected this, but she keeps trying to steer her way through. Though she never completely loses her way, she fears she may have forgotten her compass. The sun goes under a cloud and a hint of darkness begins to settle in. This is an image of where the women took me next on their journey.

What is the "something" that impedes her way? Perhaps it is a magnified form of the shadows which have now gained in power and strength. Those shadows no longer taunt from a distance, but have firmly planted themselves in front of her. They have become "major roadblocks", "rocks strewn in the path", "walls that seem too high." She feels confused about who she will need to be to get to where she wants to go. This doesn't necessarily mean that she doesn't know who she is, as Maggie clearly pointed out--"I don't ever remember thinking I wish I could fit in. I do remember thinking, I wish they'd understand that this is the way I am." Rather, the conflict is more between who she senses she is and who she thinks others expect her to be. It is perhaps a legacy brought from childhood and rooted even deeper here in adulthood.

All ten women talked about such a place along their road to self. It was a place where they as young women hadn't expected to be for it did not fit with all the promises that had been laid out before them. Yet, the conflict and the tension grew as it was felt within their personal relationships, at their place of work, and perhaps not surprising then, within their core selves.

Conflict in personal relationships. With regard to the personal conflicts they experienced, the women described such conflict happening in relationship with men as well as in regard to children. Concerning relationships with men, they spoke of the confusion and sense of betrayal they felt when those whom they believed would support their dreams, suddenly were not there. Seven women spoke--some in anger, some in sadness, some in regret--of how they felt their male partners had tried to seduce them off their road, stripping them down to a place that made their accomplishments appear twisted, that raised doubts about their "place" as females. This "warring" inside the self caused the women to wonder who they needed to be if they were to be accepted, if they were going to be able to maintain their relationships. Maggie talked about the hurt she experienced when upon graduating after long years of study, her husband seemed only able to say, "well, thank God that university business is over. Now maybe you can get down to being a proper wife." She shared how she tried to meet these " female obligations" and forget the career for a while, but knowing the inner denial and pain that choice may cost her:

> The best picture I can paint of it is a cold November day, and the wind blowing about 100 kms. an hour...there's this cold black lake and the waves just coming down, 7 miles of lake, and the clouds hanging into the valley...and the geese--the long v's of the

> Canada geese flying up and down the lake--back and forth and back and forth and this doeful honking as they fly. And the water is cold and black...That is the way I felt...trying to find my way. I really felt torn between a number of alternatives. Now do I run away? Do I drown myself? Do I go back to teaching? Do I just settle down here and knit socks?

This is a powerful image. How does she choose between two parts of herself--trying to hold on to her dream of teaching others, wanting to stay within the security and connectedness of her relationship--when her soul says that there is a need for both? And even then, fitting all that in with what society expects of her as a woman--"I knew what was expected of me but I also knew what I wanted, and that's where the conflict lay. I wanted to be the perfect mother, perfect wife, the perfect teacher."

There seemed no answer for Maggie at this point on the road. Nor did there seem to be one for Angela, Casey or Anna:

> I think pretty confused about who I was as an individual because I had tried to determine if it was me that was changing, or if it was him or, you know, what was going on after four years of preparing for this and then all of a sudden I'm in it and he didn't seem to like the person I was anymore.
>
> I never said anything any differently, but I was closer to becoming a professional that he wasn't. He didn't have those qualifications. So then I became really transformed and there were lots of lawyer jokes--lawyers are really not nice people, and who would want to go to a party with a bunch of lawyers--how boring!
>
> I was getting a very strong message that

> I was supposed to be the servant, the maid, and do what I was told, and yet there was another message I learned that women were equal to men--it was very confusing!

For Jacklyn, who is not yet married, the issue is not so much what men have taken from her in relationship, as that they have shaken her road anyway by rejecting her, she thinks because of her success:

> It's funny, you send signals but you don't know you're sending them. Female, strong athlete, accomplished in a number of areas...better educated, financially well-off...the signals those things send to males is terrible. Oh well, she's self-sufficient, she's doing fine...you know, she makes more money than I do. She works all the time, forget it!

I hear the voice of "why?", but I also hear the silent cry for love--"I would give up my job. I would start again." When I wonder why the cry is silent, I feel reflection of my own experience. I know what that repressed cry feels like. Perhaps as Jacklyn does, I have questioned if I needed to give up something in my professional world for the security of a relationship. But I have fought against expressing that question for fear it would somehow denigrate and take honor away from what I have spent the last eleven years achieving. The inner battle is felt. Maggie wonders, should I be a good wife or a good teacher? Angela and Anna ask, am I still me? Casey is confused about whether she should serve others at the expense of also serving herself. Jacklyn may wonder if she has to give up her responsible job and her financial independence and devote herself to supporting those same things for a partner. Considering the discussion in the previous theme regarding how these women had already been raised attuned to meeting the expectations of others, one can imagine that they did not know how to resolve these polarities. The roles seemed mutually exclusive to them. At that point on the road, there were few on the road to ask for help. Casey heard about the feminist movement, but didn't know how to find such liberated women:

> I didn't know any other women that would have called themselves a feminist or that seemed to be thinking that way. You know, it was very alone, other than you see it on TV and read it in the papers. There was no personal contact though. It was hard.

In this alienated place, how did the woman attempt to cope with the conflict? Perhaps not being able to bear the loss of the relationship, and trying to keep it together, at first they spoke of their somewhat obsessive efforts to "do", "everything." Anna tried "essentially to do--to get everything done--but I didn't really have enough time", even though this necessitated a denial to her self:

> You keep trying, I think, and as long as the other person is not being totally impossible, then you can kind of rationalize it to yourself that you're not really giving up too much...or it's not important enough or something.

Kathy, who had a sick child at home, felt weariness seep into her body as she tried to care for her child as well as meet the demands at work. She shared how at times she felt as if she "couldn't cope with that and coming out of a bad situation at the office. I was exhausted."

For both Kathy and Anna, there is a sense that a core part of self is starting to be lost--maybe that innocence that knew being female was honorable, that dream that said they could do anything they wanted--all replaced by a gnawing voice that taunts them "back into the kitchen." There is the loss of the inner feeling world, of creativity, spontaneity. The choices that were available were not acceptable, or possibly the women were not at a stage in their own growth where it felt safe enough to break or challenge old patterns. Maybe they didn't know how anyway, as Casey explained:

> I just felt that I had a right to be treated with more respect and more equality, but I didn't know how to do it. I wasn't--I really didn't have the skills and I didn't know how to make it happen at that point in my life. But it was a feeling like--it's almost like I feel that's who I was inside and that it was trying to express itself, but it didn't know how to come out.

Alternatively, maybe they knew how, but were just not ready to face the consequences. Anna talked about how she would back down from confrontation with her husband because she didn't want to have to cope with what that might mean:

> I didn't want to recognize that it [the marital conflict over her profession] was there. I didn't want to recognize it...I would have had to deal with it. I would have had to confront him and say, look, this is not beneficial and I don't want to be in a relationship in which I'm supposed to be, because of some social idea that you have about what wives do and what husbands do, give up something that's really important to me...I was scared that if I was actually totally direct with what I wanted, I'd lose out.

The implications of attempting any break in the pattern that kept her stuck in the "traditional wife mode" were just too painful. Why? It seems reasonable that being alone and single in a society that still says attractive women attract men would have been two difficult messages to get by. Maybe it's that we women don't know who we are outside this bond with men because we have not yet discovered who we are beyond who we have been told to be. Our knowledge of our selves is still at a beginning stage. I don't pretend I can support the radical view that women don't need men in their lives to feel complete, because I come from the position that God created men and women to journey together. However, in my mind, that is different from needing men to tell us who we are.

How does one adequately paint the sense of despair that these women felt at this time in their lives, thinking that they had to play one part of self against another, feeling very alone in that place? I sense a familiar confusion within myself as I write this, for it brings back memories of a long-term relationship I ended two years ago. All during my graduate training, this man helped nurture my dreams by listening to my hurts when a colleague had ridiculed me, by hearing my desperation at not being able to make a paper come together, by celebrating with me when I completed major projects, by providing financial help. However, as I got further along toward being a psychologist, I started to hear, "you don't really know what you're talking about", "counsellors don't help anyway--it's all a bunch of crap." I felt stung, and the sting was so sharp and unexpected that I didn't know how to react, how to make sense of the pain that this man I had loved had just inflicted. I feel that same sting when I listen to how Casey felt "betrayed, anger at how could somebody do this to me; not fair"! I feel it still as I hear Anna's experience:

> I felt betrayed. The feeling I had was betrayal, that I had planned this, that I had not just made this decision to go to law school for Anna ...but that Anna, the person who was married to this [man] would have a better relationship.

Maggie's searched for the words to describe her feelings as she tilted her head and said, "anger isn't the right word, and believe me I've spent a lot of time thinking about that--bewilderment"!

Although the majority (seven) of the women spoke to this experience of invalidation in their personal relationships with men, it is important to note that three of the co-participants described a different experience. Kassandra's relationship appeared to be the exception in this group of ten for she spoke warmly of a husband whom she felt was more supportive of her than she was of herself:

> I was going to sort of just, in my mind, test the waters and see if I wanted to be a student again. He was really supportive and encouraging and has been, I guess, has always sort of seen the potential that I never wanted to believe was there.

For Peg and Doris, while they saw their mates as supporting their dreams, they suggested that possibly there was a mixed message:

> I'm sure that if I'm around, he assumes I'm going to be looking after things. If I'm not around, he'll step in and be quite responsible from the point of view of looking after the kids--not very responsible in terms of tidying up the house.

> He was very supportive always. When the kids were small and I wanted to work, he was supportive of that because he certainly looked down on the women who stayed home and played cards and did all that sort of thing. So he encouraged me--whatever I wanted to do was fine. I also got a lot of double messages when he felt he was being neglected...[he'd] say, no, I really think that if you do a good job and it's important to you, you must do it. Then would come that heavy period that he'd start--well, I'd better take out my black book and see who I can phone.

In addition to these conflicts the women felt in their relationships with men, there was one more relationship where they described feeling uncertain about who to be. As previously noted, that was in their relationship to children. Among the women who had not yet had any, there was a prevailing sense of ambivalence about what role motherhood was to play in their lives. Casey was an exception in that she stated she has "never had any interest in children. I didn't want to baby-sit. I was just never interested in children and I'm still not...I guess I was born without a maternal instinct." This was even though she had not gotten much affirmation for her choice:

> I was in my early 20's or early 30's before I met other women who had chosen not to have children, and I started to feel like, well maybe I'm not the only woman in the entire world that's made this decision. So I was--I did really feel alone. I mean, talk about choosing another path, that's what it felt like but I just felt so strongly about it.

For the remaining women, however, it seems that they were not able, at this point, to make a commitment either way. For Anna and Kassandra, the issue was one of timing:

> Just chronologically, the times in which the career has been going on and has been moving through its stages, those have been the same times that I guess a lot of women--you either have your family or you don't. I've never been a person who said, oh, I don't want children. Never have been that kind of person, but the decisions I made and the timing of them, they add up to the fact that children were not as important as the challenges or the things I found I wanted to do in my work.
>
> I think some of it is the curse of the 20th

> century in that it's planned parenthood. I mean, when do you ever decide and it's, I don't know, we've never, well, we've never been sort of ready or that this has been the time. Now I'm 33 years old and I'm thinking, do I really want to be 43 and have a 10 year-old at home?

There is the same sense of polarity here that the women spoke of earlier, in that they feel they have to be one thing or the another--in this case, that they can't be a mother and a professional at the same time. It seems that even for Angela, the youngest participant at 26, that dichotomy remains true:

> If I could have some assurance that I would still have a good job. I think just timing would have to be a big factor too, whether it was something that I really wanted at that time. And the commitment too, I don't even feel comfortable having a pet right now because I don't have enough time...I still don't know definitely...Maybe I'll get too old to have children, you know?

What is this saying about the influence that being professional has on the decision to parent? Possibly the Anna's, Kassandra's and Angela's of the world are women like me who lean toward not having children at all. However, maybe they feel, also like me, that they would have liked to have the space to decide, but that somehow that drive to meet standards that may not have been their own, allowed little time for making those kinds of decisions. Anna spoke about this awareness that maybe comes too late:

> I don't think people necessarily set aside time to think about an issue that's going to face them in the next five years; i.e.,

> if you're 34 and you decide, well, I'd really better think about childbearing years now. I don't believe people really do it that way. I think that time goes on, decisions are made, and then you turn around and realize what you did to get there.

What about the women who presently have children? Kathy described those times when she felt she had to be either the lawyer or the mom--"I suppose I have repeatedly had to consider whether I should quit work to look after her [ill daughter], or whether looking after her would in fact be a worse option than trying to do the two things." Similarly, Peg also has felt the tension of it being "very hard going back when they're two or three months old and leaving them." It is a tension that left her feeling confused about which role she was playing at any given time:

> I think for a long time I had all my roles all mixed up because life was just so intense and so busy. It was difficult for me to sort out who I was in the middle of this, and also, yes, to keep myself separate from my role as physician, my role as a mother and wife and all of the other things.

In both these relationships--with men and in regard to children--there is a sense of needing to dichotomize self just to survive. At this point on their journey, possibly the women did not remember any other way to exist, so they tried to satisfy the expectations of all those "selves." Yet, doing so left them with a tangle of unanswered questions like, "Do I be a good wife or a good teacher"?, "Am I still me"?, "Whom do I try to please"?, "Is there anybody out there who understands"? They are searching for the answers, but nobody has helped them to remember where they needed to go to find them.

Conflict at work. The dilemma of feeling torn between wanting to be true to self and feeling influenced by the expectations of "other" extended into the workplace. The influence was felt in relationship with male as well as female colleagues. In regard to men, to a large extent, the women told how they continued to be treated with disrespect and even disdain. It became not only a conflict between whether they were going to choose wife-mother-friend-professional, it was a growing sense that to be female, period, was somehow unacceptable or less than. They learned that this part of self was a liability that could impede rather than compliment their professional goals. Kathy described that time in her life like this:

> I realized that they weren't buying into my ideas--they were buying into the novelty of my ideas...I came very quickly to use the metaphor 'prostitution'. I felt very much like a prostitute.
>
> We essentially had to promise to be men...to practice law just like men did, that we wouldn't try to disrupt in any way the way the practice of law had traditionally been carried out. We also promised to stay on the fringes, to do the Family Law work, to do the juvenile delinquency work, the things women might be expected to do best.

Anna also spoke to this need to pretend that she had bought into the male club so she could be accepted by her male colleagues:

> You're treated as 'one of the guys', which means that sometimes you can feel a little bit lost...It's the role you've been cast in and it's easier to say okay, we'll do it this way...I was trying to be, I guess, more acceptable.

What is the message that Kathy and Anna might have heard in regard to their femaleness? Maybe that it was there to serve some male purpose, that it had limitations, that it may not be a valued part of who they knew they were. One can sense the turmoil they must have felt as they tried to process what they were feeling--do I acknowledge my femaleness and maintain my self-respect, or pretend it's no big thing and risk losing that respect? In my mind, this seems like an impossible tension to be in for costs would probably seem high no matter what they did.

For Peg, who trained in medicine, another traditional male field, she voiced how deep that cost and devastation went for her:

> Because it had always been a male group, their approach to me was always with very little understanding of who I was and where I was emotionally, and the fact that it wasn't always easy. I think during all that time that I really felt devastated. I'm sure I was clinically depressed for a while.

The treatment seemed no better in professions typically dominated by females. Both Maggie and Angela talked about the low status they felt they had been given, and they attribute it to their femaleness:

> While I was a department head, teachers in the school...were supposed to, if they had a complaint, come through the hierarchy. And I can remember a variety of, always men, bursting into my office, no knocking, and starting to yell at me while I'm sitting there with a student in my office with the door closed. Now I can guarantee that they would not have done that to another man but they did it to me.
>
> I've had male lawyers ask me to go out and photocopy things for them. They would just never do that to a male social worker...I felt just like a gopher, like I'm 12 years old, you know, like I'll run and do this for you. It's as if it's a hierarchy and you're low on the pit. It's really a degrading kind of feeling.

Even for Katie who as a nurse one might expect to receive some respect for the care she provided in alleviating suffering, the feeling of being low in the pecking order prevailed:

> If they know you are a nurse, they'll tell you many intimate things. But, when it really comes down to saying, you know, if they were in the hospital or in any treatment setting, they tend to, especially in the hospital, give the credit to the physician as if the physician had done almost everything, when in fact, after let's say a surgery, what they stay in the hospital for is not for the physician but for nursing care.

In reading these words over, it may seem easy for us to blame this "persecution" all on the fact that we are women and men are men. However, at least one woman was brave enough to admit that she herself may be one of those persecutors. Kathy, in a voice perhaps of regret, described to me how she had at one time felt torn about which gender, which "side" she needed to stand on if she was to gain acceptance in the professional world. Should she side with men because they are perceived as having the power, or should she pave the way for other women by personifying the power of women? This does not necessarily imply that she was willing to buy completely into the male model, but rather that she felt she had to pretend to. She talked bitterly about this position she felt forced to take:

> Being a professional meant adopting the view that women weren't worthwhile, as opposed to somehow getting there and proving that women were worthwhile. You had to go along with the guys. You had to be as much like them as possible, and that meant looking down on other women...Being there meant you weren't really a woman or you wouldn't be there, so that you were somehow denying the fact of being a woman...It made me complicitous in the hatred of women...and that resulted in tremendous self-hatred.

This may seem like "traitorous" behavior. Yet, if we are to truly understand this place on the road for Kathy, it is important to take into consideration the possibility that she may have felt very alone. The women talked about not feeling that other professional women were going to talk to them about how they might be feeling. They verified that there were not many examples out there of how to do things differently. Peg and Kathy attest to this alienation that Kathy may have felt in saying that it was their perception that they were essentially on their own:

> There may have been a few role models, but

> certainly no mentors and nobody there to say either, this was quite normal. There was nobody there to share these things with. And, in fact, other women that I'd worked with and trained with I also felt were sort of sealed right up in terms of discussing any of these feelings, so it really was quite difficult because I felt very alone with who I was and what I was going through.
>
> There have been models I suppose I've rejected more than models that I would seek to emulate. I certainly haven't had anybody there that I could see and say, 'that's the kind of person I want to be, and I'm going to sort of study her and try to develop in the way that she has', no.

Perhaps even if there is courage to speak up, there is fear that somehow those other women will take advantage of that openness. We have seen only too well from observing men that status typically comes to those who are "very good" at being impersonal and independent in their professional conduct. That competition has pitted souls that might otherwise have reached out, against each other. Katie, a woman whose profession is nursing, perhaps one of the oldest female-dominated professions and one which has been know for nurturing, shared her hurt and sense of confusion over what goes on in the department where she teaches:

> The comraderie that I have had with females in my profession--I see that as a tremendous positive...but there's the other more negative side...a great deal of back-stabbing...I feel, for want of a better term, that some of my colleagues work much more of what I would call the male model; that is, really cut-throat, highly competitive, don't tell anybody what you're doing because they might, you know, take your work. And I find that conflictual because I am someone who is very open, very

honest; I talk about what I am doing.

The ostracism of these women was complete in that they also did not have the support of women outside the professional world. Perhaps one would expect that animosity there, and as expected, it was. Anna noted this sense of rejection that she felt from women who worked at home:

> Women who've stayed at home have always thought, oh well, career women don't value what we do because we're mothers and we're wives and we're at home, and I think that's probably true. There's a problem there, but there is also a problem with women who identify solely with wife and mother, we are real women, and people who are professional or who are divorced or separated by choice, there's something non-female about them.

The struggle here strikes even deeper for the dilemma may be, am I to be a female and stay home or do I take up a profession and become a man? The professional woman remains at war within herself, with a gender identity that she sees is becoming a liability rather than a celebrated part of her existence.

As I listen to these words, I can't help but think of that young woman on the road now. She may want to give up trying to clear the way for it seems that the rocks and obstacles are coming at her from all directions. It would be understandable that she may be tempted to admit defeat. When I asked the women about this time, Maggie's words were powerful and they have stayed with me. She explained that though she felt she did get off the road, she didn't go far. She sat at the side, and even though that side was like a "big black hole", she never lost faith in herself. Thus, the stop at the side was not in defeat, but to steady the internal compass that would point her on the rest of her way. She reminded me of those times when, faced with adversity, I often have drawn into myself before I could remember my value and what it was I wanted for me.

Conflict within self. As the woman sits now at this side stop, while it is true that she does not feel she has completely lost her way, there is a sense that she is grieving. Jacklyn, with tears in her eyes, shared with me this poem--one that she had composed at one of those times when she was feeling loss:

"Reflections at Day's End"

Sometimes lonesome darkness
  looms helpless before me.
Yet that shadow of bitterness falling
  upon my ecstasy has sweetness too.
For even sadness has its light
  in those few stubborn rays of love
        that endure.

The shadows for her have come very close, and the light has faded. Perhaps it's an evening scene and she forgets where she left her key to get back home. She may feel as if she doesn't even know which key will fit now, as Maggie and Kathy imply:

> I was almost a transvestite; I was a cross-over, and coming from a generation that

> didn't even understand the word 'homosexual', a cross-over--that was quite serious. You just didn't do this; you did not take on male roles, male responsibilities...and it was most unfortunate for those of us who did.
>
> We talked about how being lawyers affected us as women. People talked particularly of the chameleon effect, that we aren't really ourselves as professionals. We take on the appearance that we're supposed to have in court or in the office, or whatever. We try to shed that when we go home, but in effect maybe we're just chameleon-like. It's not that when we're at home we're any more ourselves than when we're at work, but we try to accommodate those various expectations, and maybe neither of them really belong to us.

Alternatively, perhaps she thinks she is going to have to put part of her self, her feminine disposition to care, to create something of her own, away. That belief that they have to lock their femaleness away because it is not valued is suggested in these words spoken by Jacklyn and Anna:

> What I've done to survive that or to grow in that environment is just to have a dichotomy, have two worlds. I have an outside world where I am very much, you know, I fit the model of success...And then I have this other world, which is a silent world, which is a much more creative world and a much more feeling world and a caring world.
>
> I think the part of you that is genuinely upset or moved by a client's problem, someone who really does get depressed by the work you're doing and would like to be able to express to people, colleagues, that you're not having a very good day--not just because so-and-so hasn't paid his bill, but because you don't know what to do about your client whose got all of these problems and it just looks hopeless to you; this is really getting you down. It's not appropriate in the professional setting.

For Kathy, she feels she has become a contortion:

> You lose it (female side)...You lose track of it...that it exists...You become a contortion just like the men are.

One hears other feelings that come as the woman sits

by the road--anger:

> Just tremendous rage! I'm very angry, very deeply, and the anger goes all the way down in ways that I don't think men understand at all.

Discouragement:

> It makes me a bit discouraged about my gender, you know?

Having no choice:

> I didn't feel like I had much choice--if I wanted to go to law school, this was what law school was--so take it or leave it!

Loneliness:

> A loneliness, a knowledge that it probably isn't going to change as much as I'd like it to...I know that I have asked for too much--I haven't spoken that thought--but within me I have expected too much from a man in terms of tolerance and understanding. It never materialized.

Sadness:

> I have a tendency to look at the world through rose-colored glasses--at least I did for a long time--and think that I could make it the way I wanted it to be. It just never worked out that well.

But also value and honor:

> I value myself as important as any man, and if I value myself as important as any man, why have they got the right to say, no, I don't want to do this, or yes, I want to do that, and I don't have that right?

Reflections on the Question. As I come to the end of this theme of "Not Knowing Who To Be," I have no questions, only reflections to "be" with. I think about the voices which said, "I have been deserted, and I don't know why." I heard the response of anguish, "but I tried to meet their expectations. I did everything right." This was even though that effort to get it right came at the cost of polarizing self into many pieces. The pieces cry, "I am alone. I feel lost. The rocks are many but I am only one." Jacklyn voiced this sense of silent desperation in one of her poems, from which I provide an excerpt:

"Reflections Upon Gazing at Northern Lights"

> Which path to follow to the star-clad skies?
> How to navigate rocky crags before closed eyes?
> Fear leads blind, while love casts light.
> To follow, how to go, no simple plight.
> One foot forward, other goes back.
> Life's advance.
> No clear pattern, only riddles but not by chance.

How do I get where I want to be? The rays of light beckon her on, but seem at this point on her journey to be just beyond her grasp, to be "out there."

What am I saying about how this theme has answered my question? I am saying that actually entering professional life has deepened the cut of the shadows, to an extent that the young woman battles within herself about what value her feminine actually has. She has been tested, and she has been deeply wounded. Yet, maybe the wounds have just served to strengthen her for the fight she faces ahead.

Fighting For Who I Am

> *"Some trees grow very tall and straight*
> *and large in the forest close to each other,*
> *but some must stand by themselves or they*
> *won't grow at all."*
>
> *- Oliver Wendell Holmes (cited in Running*
> *Press, 1991).*
> *American writer*

By A. Carlyle

The woman now takes an abrupt turn on her road, and while she is still moving forward, there is a sense that she may be revisiting an earlier time, maybe a place similar to childhood to reclaim the boldness and sense of purpose that were possessed there. She has begun to move from the side, onto the road again, and while she does so with fear, she also feels a surge of her own power and determination! It has gotten dark enough outside of herself for her to recognize the light inside, for her to remember that it is she who holds the key. She feels growing strength as she decides to push ahead, taking a turn toward the place where she realizes she wants to be. She feels something rise inside her chest as she "fights" for who she believes she really is.

There is an empowering shift here as the focus turns from external to internal, from other to self, from darkness to light. The feminine begins to bloom in a much deeper way; it may in fact take on a whole new meaning. All ten women talked, in some form, about this recharging of their feminine. They spoke in a voice ignited by the realization that they deserved better, in a voice fevered by the passion of their inner knowing, in a voice growing in confidence about who they really were. Following are their words describing how those turning points came about, and about how they fought and rebelled against constraints which they felt were toxic to their feminine being.

How the turning points came about. In one word, the experience of the women now became one of having to "fight" for who they believed they were. The spark for the fight flared from a sense of having the feminine so trampled that it had to strike back if it was to survive. That choice to fight, as indicated in these words spoken by Casey and Maggie, was often triggered by the realization that they had just had enough:

> I fought back. Sort of that passive-aggressiveness. I'll be very quiet and take all kinds of shit for a long time, and then all of a sudden I just get aggressive and say, enough of this; I'm going to change the situation and I do it very suddenly...Everytime I do it, it seems to improve my life, you know. I just charge into a new direction that looks like it's going to be better.
>
> I was hiding--for a long time I hid so much of me. I might have gone on hiding forever except for a couple of really traumatic things that happened in my life, and I said, 'To hell with it; I don't need this anymore'. So I quit!

This determination to buck the odds and take a stand was fueled by a growing awareness that they were strong, angry enough, that they had something inside themselves that no one could ever take away. While they acknowledged that external supports had played a role, I got the sense that the decision and the courage to get back on the road was foremost and ultimately their own. That is, they acknowledged how feminism, further education, therapeutic and collegial support, and their religious faith helped them begin to reclaim their feminine, but the impetus came first from within self. Their personal resourcefulness and perseverance then prompted them to seek out those external supports that would nurture that which they felt they had lost.

The turn in the road appeared to start just as a gnawing, general knowing that something was not right, that something had to change, that they were not happy, that it wasn't what they had hoped for. Thus, it seems that the shift was less a knee-jerk reaction than a serious response to a need for real change. Maggie and Jacklyn voiced that growing awareness that there was a way out, that they themselves could effect that difference in their lives:

> Maybe it was watching the geese fly up and down and they eventually got out. They just took off one day and flew through the clouds; you could watch them. All day long they fly back and forth waiting for the clouds to leave, and the clouds didn't leave, but those geese always did.
>
> There was a point when I was very unhappy in the work I was doing and I didn't feel qualified at all, and I felt I wasn't being true to the inner deeper self.

That kind of reflection seemed to be the power source for realizing that while change was needed, it would only come as a result of their own rebellion and strength. Maggie described that feeling of knowing that she was just going to have to carry on--still alone:

> Some of that inner strength that I'd learned to lean on when I was living by myself...I guess came to the fore, and knowledge that if I was going to survive, I was going to do it on my own, and I started to make that change from 'I don't care' and 'probably I won't', to 'yes I will'!

Casey phrased it as coming to realize that she "couldn't follow a beaten path. I didn't see one. It was almost like I was in the forest and which way do I go"?

Each time I read these words and hear the determined but sad voice that says, "Something needs to change but

I'm going to have to do it on my own again", I have a growing appreciation for the pioneering spirit that these women possessed--forging, building the road as they went along. My image of that primitive road is of a "quieting" in the midst of a storm, a sense of a distant turmoil but a nearness of calm. Maggie's image was of a wilderness road which was "peaceful but not civilized." Peg talked about "wanting to cut [her] own path", being hungry for the "freedom to choose." Kathy described the turn as "coming back to a safe place." For all these women, it was a place of their own creation, in contrast to, as described in the first theme, a place that was created for them. While the place may have felt in some ways familiar, as in a reunion with a lost part of self, there was also a feeling of coming back with the power and authority of a wiser and more holistic perspective.

As the women spoke of claiming this inner wisdom, I felt both elated and sad--elated because it was a sign that maybe, finally we were starting to listen more to our own voices than to the voices of others. I wanted to cheer at this honoring of self. I was also sad because I sensed I was hearing the echo of an old message--that women have had to fend for themselves. I knew what that struggle was like for I had lived it. I live it still. How I wonder in what way my experience could have been different had my feminine been valued. I think of a verse from a favorite book of mine, Circle of stones: A woman's journey to herself (Duerk, 1989, p. 4), where the author asks:

> How might your life have been different if there had been a place for you? A place for you to go...a place of women, to help you learn the ways of woman...a place where you were nurtured from an ancient flow sustaining you and steadying you as you sought to become yourself. A place of women to help you find and trust the ancient flow already there within yourself...waiting to be released...

A place of women...

How might your life have been different?

I do not attempt to answer the question, for I have my own dreams about how my life might have been different, just as I invite the reader to have his or her own dreams...Yet, perhaps our dreams may not be that different.

In addition to their pioneering spirit, there was another thing that I appreciated about these women. That was their willingness to acknowledge the help they received along the way. I appreciated it because asking for help is a painful source of difficulty for me. They did it in such a way so as not to dishonor the major work that they had done themselves. One of the four sources of help they identified, as mentioned above, was the feminist movement. Even though for Casey there were few feminists for her to use as "live" models, she did feel influenced by their liberating message:

> I was connecting with the feminist movement that had gone on when I was about 16 years old...I was associating myself in many ways with them, I guess in a moderate way, but I was following that thinking.

Jacklyn also noted the affirmation that the feminist movement brought to her--"one thing that the feminist movement has done is to draw attention to the need to feel good about the female side, which I think is a huge attribute."

In addition, they acknowledged an education system that was, maybe belatedly, but nevertheless acknowledging that past modes and content of learning had omitted the uniqueness of the female experience. Perhaps they were helped by research coming out which challenged age-old theories that males and females develop in the same way. A most notable ground-breaking study was that of Carol Gilligan (1993) where she described women's moral development to be unique and worthy of special consideration. That affirmation of their experience made that same experience come alive to them. Kathy spoke strongly of the value that these educative opportunities offered her:

> Oddly enough, going back to law school has been the strongest factor in my emerging sense of myself as a woman...Everything I read seemed to reverberate with my experience. I was more intellectually alive than ever before in my life. As I began to read feminist theory, I began to see my own life cast in relief against the backdrop of a male-defined world. I began to see those aspects of myself as a woman that had been invisible all those years. Features that I

> knew I possessed--a deep sense of justice, a type of caring and connectedness, a respect for the harmony and subtlety of nature--were being described and valued. The qualities of womanhood that men preferred and which I had shunned, like physical beauty, submissiveness, adoration, mindless servitude, were being exposed for what they were--devices to perpetuate the oppression of women.

It is almost as if she learned a new definition of her femaleness. It was a way of being that was familiar because it resonated with her inner world, but at the same time it was not that familiar, maybe because it had been buried for so long--my experience exactly!

Jacklyn also learned about a new way to define herself, not just in the sense of having her feminine affirmed, but somehow realizing that maybe the anima could co-exist alongside a strong animus:

> I read Carl Jung who I think is marvelously insightful, and he helped, I think, really resolve the angst altogether by describing these archetypes and the characteristics... He calls them the anima and the animus--the female and the male--and recognizing that in any one individual you can have very strong elements of both...I would say that since those discovery days, I guess in early university--that's about 10 years ago--I have been much more at peace with myself.

Casey, Jacklyn and Maggie, respectively, described how therapeutic and collegial support helped them blaze that new direction:

> I decided to go see a psychiatrist, going to fix this, and I was really lucky. I went to a very good person, and all he said to me was, 'you don't have any goals in your life'. Go home and think about that and if you need to, come back and see me. I never did...I went away and started thinking about goals and decided to go to university, and

> it really, just really changed my life!
>
> I went and saw some counsellors trying to get some help, and recognized that I was really out of my element...I didn't give up. Maybe that's it--I persevered a lot, through a lot of those kinds of self-doubts and traumas.
>
> They [school board] had written to me...saying that they had decided to extend my sabbatical leave, and even though I wasn't there and even though I mightn't come back, etc., etc., I could still have it, and they'd make it two years instead of one if I liked. It was certainly a real encouragement to me that somebody out there saw me as something other than this sick little creature that was wandering around __________ in a fog.

Lastly, a strong underlying faith was a support that Jacklyn spoke of:

> In that uncertainty, I go back to a fairly strong base in a faith, and usually that's what I'll do. I'll go and I'll pray for some strength and I'll get a base. I'll get a grounding again--slowly.

It makes sense to me, this process that the women described, for it parallels my own journey of discovery. I like the word "discovery" here for it suggests that there is already something there waiting to be found, but that in finding it, one can bring a feeling of wonder and excitement, richness back to that core of being. My feeling that something was wrong took me into therapy. The class exercise and the visit to the doctor confirmed that there was something inside that needed to be brought out. It's like there was a web of beauty that grew more whole with each thread added, but it was the spider in the middle who had started the creation.

This process toward change, toward self, blossomed. Feeling empowered and emboldened as they clutched yet at the edges of their rediscovered wholeness, the women used their wisdom to fortify the road they had chosen to now take. They described how that choice often meant rejecting and leaving behind those rocks and shadows which had threatened to kill their inner lifeworlds.

Rebelling against the constraints. The surge of "I can be who I am" brought a sense of life back into an existence that was really operating at half-measure. It was a richer and more connected life than maybe they had experienced even in childhood, for now it was "I can be me", rather than "we will tell you who 'me' is." There was a sense of taking ownership, driving their own destiny. With this intoxication of freedom, however, came realization of decisions and conflict they were going to have to face if they were to truly defend their value--things like confront or leave a partner, leave a job, strike against the system. It was to be an individual decision for there were few supporters flagging by the sidelines, urging them on. Anna talked about how, for her, it meant weighing the costs and deciding to leave her husband, a man she had thought would be part of her dream:

> I think I focused on this person and this relationship and it hadn't worked. I would have felt worse had I tried longer to adapt and do everything and be everything...He

> would have said, give up the job and be at home and do these things because we'll be [happy]--and it wouldn't have been and I know that...It was perhaps best that the relationship ended although it was painful.

Although anyone who has lost a relationship can imagine just how painful that might have been for Anna, especially after she had tried so very hard to make the marriage work, she was convinced that it was the right thing for her to do--"I didn't think, never did think, well I should have given up my work. I wouldn't have been happy with myself had I done that." The strength of this resolve was in it's connection to what she really valued for herself, which she remembered as she began to listen to that self. It was a resolve that she had had all along, but which had lain muted by the discourse of her gendered experience.

Casey also talked about this "bend-over-backwards" struggle in trying to make her marriage better:

> I tried a lot of things at the time. I tried talking to him; we went to counselling...then I went through a period where I just gave up trying to get him to help me with anything and just do the work myself...I fought back by refusing to do things like iron his clothes, make his lunch...I'd try to just avoid him and try to keep things very mellow, see if that would calm him down and the battle would go away.

But finally realizing that it wasn't what she wanted anymore, that it just wasn't worth it, she said "I finally left...I decided to get a divorce and be done with it...I just had enough of this"!

The decision to leave the marriage was right for Anna and Casey, according to these comments. However, that does not mean that all the married women I met felt a need to do so. Peg remained with her partner. She admitted that she did not directly confront him with his need to contribute more to household chores. Rather, she just stopped trying to do everything herself, in a sense forcing his hand to do more. They also hired outside help in an effort to resolve the housechore issue:

> My husband can't stand not having a really good meal at dinner; he looks forward to it all day, so he's taken over most of the meal planning and cooking...I tend to do most of the work with the children...We have somebody who does most of the housework...He's just never been interested in it. It just creates so much strife trying to lay down rules of who does what that I just decided it's not worth it.

As for Doris, she also remained in her marriage. When she weighed the costs, she believed it was more right for her to stay than to leave:

> There are times when I said, okay, I won't make an issue about [my taking up new work]. It's maybe because a relationship is important to me, that I'd rather be with my husband than, say, be on my own because I haven't reached that stage of independence, I don't think...I balance it out and I'm much happier in the balancing. I have more to gain with this relationship than I lose.

Possibly her relationship was comparatively less limiting than Anna's or Casey's. Possibly, as she indicates, she herself did not feel ready to be on her own. It could also be just a difference in what was most valued. It could be a combination. It is interesting to me to note that Doris was the participant who had not completed specific professional training. She is also of an older generation, although Maggie, who has divorced, was also. One couldn't therefore say with any confidence if level of training or age might have influenced Doris's decision, but it does hint at how the experience of being "professionally" educated might have led others to a different decision. If Doris had reached that "stage of independence", would she have made another choice? She admits that the value she places on fighting for herself may not be as high as the value she puts on fighting for others:

> I don't fight for myself...I do in my marriage now, but I don't in a lot of ways too, you know. It's easier for me to fight for other people, or fight for a cause.

Possibly she finds it safer to fight for herself through others. Does that mean she has not yet found her individual voice? I don't know. It may mean she is just at a different place on her journey.

Besides the issues the women had to face in relationship with their partners, their resolve to follow their own heart also meant sometimes leaving a workplace that was toxic, and creating or taking a new direction that was more in tune with their feminine nature. It did not necessarily mean leaving the practice of their profession. Rather, for Kathy, it meant accepting another legal-type position in a more social agency-type setting:

> The criminal work was challenging on some levels, but I saw it mostly as a game with real lives at stake. Besides, getting good at it meant dealing with increasingly unsavory clients and leading a lifestyle that led some lawyers to carry guns and hire bodyguards--didn't fit any picture of the life I wanted! So when I had the chance to go to ____________ as an advisory lawyer, I jumped at it. I'd been a founding member of the organization. I held its' goals dear and it meant socially relevant work...Through my [present] work, I've been able to manage on a more holistic basis, recognize other ways of knowing besides the rational. We certainly operate with a high regard for intuition in our office. We recognize the importance of mothering and the importance of emotional bonds between our staff and our families.

There is that sense of "yes!", of finally finding that "fit" between their profession and their feminine, between who they were inside and what they were doing outside.

For Anna and Jacklyn, their response was also to get out of a work environment that cost them more than it gave back:

> I think that's probably why I don't practice now. I don't work part-time for any firm, and if I ever did work at a firm again, I have a--I'm an active member of the Law Society but I only do things on my own. I would only work in a feminist firm.

> Basically extricated myself from the source of the problem, which is either an environment or a person, and then learned from it, recognized it, and said, 'now don't ever get yourself in that situation again'.

Sometimes it meant challenging the system and striking for rights that they perceived women as not having, in comparison to men. Kassandra indicated:

> We were out on strike. [One] of the things that bothered me a lot was the whole idea of prep time in that elementary school teachers got an hour a week, and high school teachers got an hour a day. And when you look at the make-up of the high school population, it's still pretty well male-dominated, and they weren't willing to help us fight for, not even equality, but more prep time. So I guess that's one of those things I felt disadvantaged of--being a woman and being in elementary. I think males in high school sort of feel like, that what they do is more significant than working with smaller kids or something.

There is here that same resolve to challenge, to rebel, to push the limits. No longer were the women willing to let the system demean their value! Peg shared how she dealt with her father's message that she must choose between being a successful physician and a fulfilled women. She rejected his message by reapplying to medical school:

> The second time around I was a few years older, really having come around to this decision, knowing that this was what I wanted to do with my life and knowing very clearly that it was the only thing I wanted to do and I probably would be reasonably good at it. That time, instead of--I was married by that time so instead of saying that I would be an old maid, he said I would be divorced in a year or two, and of course I'd never have the chance to have children. And then I just thought, that's his perception!

She also challenged the medical school to acknowledge her right to take maternity leave, the first time a resident had done so in that hospital:

> I had another child during my residency and at that point my supervisor wasn't exactly supportive. I think he was kind of pissed off that I was pregnant and certainly didn't go over backwards, but on the other hand I just went ahead and arranged for my maternity leave on my own...I guess really what I'm saying is that I didn't let him faze me!

Finally, for Anna, challenging the constraints also meant standing up against the smaller things that women have often let past them, things like sexist jokes:

> Maybe you could go to one meeting where you didn't play by the boy's rules. Somebody tells a really stupid sexist joke and you just say very calmly, 'that's really crass; I object to that'. And you get a response like, 'you're right. I'm really sorry'.

When I read back over all these ways in which the women rebelled against their constraints, I feel a need to say, "but it was much more than--and next they did this." While the chronology of them getting to this place on their road is in a sense true, I think it is also important to recall the women's initial comments regarding how they sometimes needed to revisit earlier places to re-examine and reclaim other pieces of their experience. It was not a straight climb up that hill, but rather maybe one fraught with many twists and zigzags.

When one thinks of the inherent losses and confrontations that the women had to face, it would make sense that there may have been a sense of trepidation and fear about what all those changes would mean to the only security they probably could remember. The resolve was there, but woven into that fabric were the threads of fear. I think of the Biblical image of David and Goliath, and David going into battle with a strong heart, but maybe wondering if his slingshot was going to do the job. It was not as simple as changing the words from "probably I won't" to "yes I will." The women acknowledged the apprehension with which they approached their giants. They were going to be doing something which they had little prior experience with, and they were essentially going to be doing it alone. They only knew they had to go, they had to break the patterns, they had to make this new lease on life happen. Doris voiced this feeling of uncertainty that women might have when they challenge their traditional ways of being:

> They perhaps don't know how well they will do if they move out of that role. That role that they have performed has given them value in their husband's eyes, in 'their' eyes as being a good wife, a good mother, a good homemaker.

Perhaps it comes down to knowing "that there was something inside me that I suppose I knew all along that I'd get through this", as Maggie voiced, and feeling now the surge of their own power, as Casey described:

> It was a sense of power, I think, a sense of control over my life, having choices. I mean, it was just so wonderful. It was more wonderful than anything I'd ever gotten from any male in my life--and a realization that I was, I was a good person.

At the same time, Casey admitted feeling afraid because there were few people around her that supported her--"It was something that was a little bit radical, breaking the mold and everything. That's the way I kind of saw it. It was a little bit scary too."

Peg spoke of feeling that all the "stakes" had been taken away, even though she had discarded them herself, and how exposed that left her:

> I'd always come out at the top of the heap and always gotten a lot of accolades, and had a lot of really positive feedback about myself. And then suddenly remove all that and I really had to fight for who I was.

Kathy described that pull between voices that warned "there's still tremendous emphasis on the male norm, and you deviate from the male norm at your peril", and the inner need which convinced her that "you can take that risk if you're prepared to really invest in it." That taking of the risk sparked an aliveness that perhaps overrode the fear. Maggie described that sense of starting to feel again, "as I started to recover, I started to get some feelings back--good, bad, indifferent, the rebellious ones, the black ones, but at least I wasn't numb anymore."

On a precipice...the women are nearing the crest of the hill, leaving old footing, looking forward toward promise and feeling hope, but sensing that there is farther to go. The way may not be perfectly clear. It is more a sense that the promise of wholeness, value, of belonging, is floating around their head, close enough for them to know it, but not yet firmly within their grasp.

As I remain joined with the women on the hill, I feel their jubilation! I now understand, in a new and deeper way, the dance they have had to do to get this far for, in a sense, they have taken me along with them. I know the feeling of being suffocated, the tension of realizing that to stay on the same course may be to die whereas to change direction may be to live. I can remember that growing sense of perseverance inside that propels one to choose life.

Reflections on the question. Now again I pause and reflect on what this theme has added to my understanding of my inquiry. It has told me of the strength and integrity of spirit, and I'm not sure at this time whether that spirit has a gender. But it is alive; it has its own heartbeat that survives through trial, that swells with each touchstone of discovery. The women have told me what some of those touchstones have been for them. They have told me of what they have "done" to once again feel the power of that heartbeat. They have told me of beginning to reconnect with a knowing about who they are. I celebrate the rediscovery. I ask the women now, how did you nurture that reconnection and make it grow? And they continued their story, as I tell it to you in the next theme.

Growing In Who I Am

> *"What woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given to her when we left our common home."*
>
> *- Margaret Fuller (cited in Hazeldon Educational Materials, 1992)*

By R.F. Jevne

Maggie told me, "I've climbed and now I'm at the top of the [hill]. I see footprints ahead. The way is well-lit, although I can't see where the [prints] end. There is shelter but I need to seek it. Topographically [the road] is similar to childhood, but a more agreeable place to be. The restrictions are gone." When I turn these words over and listen for the voice, I hear a sense of something being freed, unleashed, allowed to roam in search of the food that is needed to feed the soul which has been thirsting.

This sense of searching, of being quenched is the image I heard as I listened to some of the women describe to me where they feel they are presently at. I hesitate to try to put my interpretation on how many of them feel they have "reached" this point, for two reasons. First, I believe to do so would be placing my value on their process, and I do not want to define for them what stage of growth "I" think they are at. The second reason, which ties in with the first, is, remembering that the women said their road to self at times looped back on itself, it is probable that a woman may not stay at the top of the hill or even get too far over the other side before she feels a need to go back to reclaim pieces that may have been forgotten, or too heavy to carry on the previous trip. I believe it is sufficient and more authentic to say that women talked about being on that hill top at some time.

The efforts needed to reach the top included the women beginning to listen to an inner voice which said if they were going to survive, they needed to make time for quiet, for reflection. It included them "being" in that quietness so as to learn new ways to understand and define who they were. It included them beginning to break down the walls of isolation and reaching out for support. It is these three efforts which I address in this theme.

Making time for quietness. The image I have now is of a woman resting at the top of the hill, perhaps sitting on a large, strong boulder, and leaning toward the view that is spread before her. As she stares into the open space, she sees a kaleidoscope of images representing who she has seemed to be at different times in her life. As the kaleidoscope turns, however, and the images pass over each other, her eyes are drawn to a particular image that seems to keep coming through. She recognizes this as a constant, and she tries to steady the images enough to keep that constant in focus. She must be quiet, for it is easily blurred. She focuses on that constant as she notices the road continuing to take shape before her.

It was in just that stillness that the women described to me how they began to really hear and honor the voice of their inner consciousness. That they had to strain to hear it is not surprising considering how deeply it had had to hide to feel safe--as Maggie said, "for so long I hid so much of me." It was not until the women refused to let the voice stay hidden, and fought to bring it out, with its pain but also its joy, that they could really start to grasp and understand just how powerful and wise it was. There was a sense now of just wanting to "be" with that wisdom. Anna spoke of the need to carve out that space for being:

> In a very busy life I feel this need to have some place that's calm and quiet of my own...there's too much demand...I need space for me and I carve that space off, and it's filled with music.

Jacklyn shared openly with me how her wisdom flows out of the tip of her pen as she expresses, in poetic form, what her inner voice tells her:

> 'Not by rules but by rhythms I must flow'. In other words, trust in your life and trust in your instincts and in your intuition. If I were to be one based on rules, I'd have broken them all, and yet I don't want to judged harshly.

The voices say to "listen to the music of thine own soul... celebrate in its melody and harmony." They say to trust its' gut instinct, to create for that instinct a frame of reference that validates rather than suffocates its' way of being. They say to make space in life to hear, to be.

I believe the voices to be right, for I know that it was not until I put away all my distractions and travelled to the mountains, not until I listened to the peacefulness of the nature sounds emerging from music pieces that I had brought back from the mountains, that I was able to hear the cries of my child who told me what I needed to write in the first chapters of this document. She was not in the busyness of my head, but in the depth of my soul, but I had to clear away the clutter before I could hear her. There had to be a commitment to creating the space, to listening for that constant in the voice that begged to be heard. When we, my child and I, started to listen, to question all that we had been told, what did we hear, what did we learn? For me, as well as for some women in this study, one very empowering thing we learned was that there were other ways to be.

Learning "new ways to be". What are these other ways that the woman by the fire learns about? She unearths, maybe for the first time, her "power in being a woman", and feels a joy in that knowing. She begins to think that maybe "being female doesn't have to mean being limited by definitional boundaries." She just wants to be her self, and all that that might entail. She learns that "being professional is more about doing your best and engaging all of yourself in a task", than about graduating from university, carrying around a briefcase and talking about how busy you are.

In regard to the first, feeling her power as a woman, there is a sense that she is starting to be convinced that she can make the shadows go away or at least overpower them, that she can make her dreams come true. This was for her a "fresh" message, Kathy said, amidst all the hurtful ones she had been slapped with most of her life. She spoke simply but eloquently of "sensing the tremendous power of being a woman. For the first time in my life, I'm glad I'm a woman." This is a brave statement considering the articles one reads in the paper every day about the abuse of women, indeed an abuse that continues to be "rampant" in the very profession Kathy works in--law. This is according to the results of a new study on gender bias in the law profession (Arnold, 1993, August 14). For Kathy, her conviction seemed to signify arrival, not in the sense of having a burgeoning private practice in which she was making thousands of dollars a week, but in the sense of, by rejecting those external standards, she had redefined and rediscovered the value of her internal, feminine self.

It was regarding this concept of the "feminine self" about which the woman resting on the hill heard a second message. What did that mean, for now there were many pieces of her "self" that she had to integrate. There was the public "masculine" that had been encouraged by the external world. There was this new sense of her feminine, a part she was learning was not confined to giving birth to children, for example, but also meant giving nurturance in relationship, that valued intuition as a way of knowing. Then there was something else, and maybe we can just call it her humanness, her spirit, that core of self that both transcends and provides the foundation for all the other elements to branch out from. Comments from the women demonstrate this sense of their needing to open the boundaries on how they chose to define themselves. Jacklyn, the woman who had been helped by reading Jung and finding out that the feminine did not have to exist in isolation, was able upon continued reflection to say:

> You have to think--rather than in the western sense of right and wrong, good and bad, or black and white; i.e., dichotomy as a negative --think of it more in the Eastern religious sense of Ying and Yang, the complementary elements of dichotomy which actually adds levels and shades of richness...as an element of enriching complexity.

Kassandra spoke about wanting to be recognized for her total self, her individuality rather than by a narrow definition of who she was supposed to be as a woman:

> By being female I hope that doesn't mean I have to fit some kind of mold or some kind of pattern. To me, being able to be an individual with the individual make-up of my interests, my abilities, my strengths and my needs, are what define me as an individual...I don't mean that in the sense of wanting to deny that I'm a female because obviously we bring a unique perspective to our world and that's really valuable, but I think I want to be known as an individual, not as a female necessarily.

One could say that Kassandra might merely be reacting to the narrow way femaleness has traditionally been defined. Yet, I sense that her voice is strong in saying that she is much more than any fixed definition that might be put upon her. I think she is saying, "I need room to be me." I heard this same message about wanting to be "all that I am" from Casey:

> I think it's all one. I don't see it as a

> separate part of who I am...Part of myself is female and part of myself is my level of esteem and my level of awareness and the level of power I have, I feel I have.

One may sense a division here in Casey's choice of words; that is, for example, that she sees her femaleness as being separate from her awareness and her power. Yet, she says in the first sentence that it is all one.

The growth here appears to be beyond reclaiming the value and power of the feminine. It seems that there is now a need to see self as an integrated whole. Perhaps the women are saying that they will no longer be penned in by preconceived notions, but will open their souls to growing in all that they are. In other words, they will no longer be "told who to be."

To this point, the learning appears to have been directed inward to redefinition of the basic "me." Going back to the woman on the hill, however, I see her begin to move now outside the safety of her own boundary. She holds fast to her faith and trust in herself, and it accompanies her as she travels back into the upper world, into the professional world. She starts to form a vision of how she will keep all of her self, especially her feminine nature alive so that she may function at full-measure. This move has two dimensions--redefining "professional", and creating different ways of "being" in her work, ways that are in line with this new sense of professional. In terms of the former, redefining "professional", the essence here is different from the discussion in the third theme where the women had "done" things to make their work more meaningful. In this present theme, the emphasis is on "being" in their work, feeling internally connected to its' goals and directions. The women on the hill reflects on how the old rules of "professional" behavior--not to feel emotional, not to speak up to colleagues when they had treated her unfairly--had crippled her feminine and cast it into a pit of alienation. She feels the need to now make some different choices about what being professional will actually mean for her.

When I asked each woman to tell me what she came to believe about her professionalism, I learned it was more about developing an attitude than simply a set of skills. It was about integrating the wisdom that flowed from within rather than from the lecturing podiums of university classrooms. From her letter to her daughter, Kathy shared this:

> She'll address her life with meaning, commitment, and the sure knowledge that she's a whole and wholesome person. I guess that's where I come out on the difference between being a professional and just having a job. It's something to do with how you engage yourself as a whole person in your work.

Jacklyn and Doris, respectively, shared this:

> You begin to understand that a professional is not a black-and-white person. You know, the stereotype says you have to be a cold, calculating, hard-toothed person in business, but that's really not correct. Such behavior usually damages the

> psyche because it forces you to be so rational and logical.
>
> Being a professional, to me, means being sincere in what you are doing, doing it to the best of your ability and loving what you are doing, and when you get tired or when you are not loving it anymore--it becomes a chore--you must stop doing it because to me that's not being a professional; that's being an automaton, a robot.

There is a sense of offering the total self, all of one's talents and strengths in an effort that has the complementary purpose of developing one's own potential as well as supporting that of others. I don't think the women were devaluing the skills and often the years of training that are often needed to be a professional; rather, it seems the difference is more between having a "profession" that may be recognized by provincial or state licensing boards, and being a "professional" in that work.

The second way in which the women took their feminine back into the upper, professional world was in making those aspects of themselves a real part of what they did in those positions. It was like finding a place where both the intellect and the spirit could work as one. For Kathy, it was realizing the meaningfulness of creating and giving birth to new ideas:

> The experiences of synergy, really seeing things growing before your eyes, seeing that people can work together, can produce beyond what they believe themselves capable of, watching, sharing the amazement with them of seeing things emerge that none of us really thought we could do.

For Angela, it was also about affirming her creativity, as well as about being free from structure. It was about helping others have better lives:

> There's a lot of different avenues that I can explore...just being a social worker...I don't feel as if I'm limited to a structure. I can book my own appointments, make my own time, be creative in my job, and you know, offer more of myself to it.
>
> My job is very meaningful in my life. You're helping other people and trying to get them back on track, and giving guidance to a lot of younger people and ensuring that they are safe, giving them an equal chance.

Still on the hill, Jacklyn spoke of the importance of caring and facilitation in her work:

> I find avenues of femaleness there that I believe [in] and continue to support...the teams I build, the problems you solve, the progress that the organization makes, the families that you get to know.

For Angela and Doris, it is about wanting to make a difference in people's lives:

> I think it's the way women perform in general, that the other people are always in your mind somewhere, not just to be applauding you but because you're supposed to be doing, or you want to be doing things that are going to make a difference for them.

It seems above all, it's about wanting to feel a part of the work, about wanting there to be no dissonance between what they were doing and who they were. I can understand that. Counselling and teaching provide those connections for me.

Again I hear these words, and I feel myself increasingly in awe of the process we women have had to work through in finding a safe enough place to declare who we truly are. It is almost as if through each step--making the decision for change; rebelling against the odds; being still and recognizing the constant in the kaleidoscope of images; redefining self in the absence of any role model; taking our feminine, connecting nature back into the world so that we could be all that we are--we have been able to grow in our convictions about how we want our life to be. Perhaps the final battle for us, however, will be deciding to share the personal pain of the fight, of the climb without giving in to the shadow of shame.

Breaking down the walls of isolation. Is it important to share our journey with others? Should the woman on the hill just be concerned about her own struggle and leave no spaces for others, or should she allow room for others to come, sit, and join with her? Kassandra voiced that tension between the voice that says, "it's only you who has this problem", and honoring the need to reach out and have one's feelings affirmed:

> I think that we often embrace that as sort of our own personal struggle and don't want to perhaps reveal that to other people. But then in the process, I think we would empower or give agency to women if we worked together. I think the way you worded that question, something about our hopes for professional women, in a sense is the stance that there is already solidarity among women, and I don't think there is.

But if you extend the invitation, will anybody come or will the very ones you reach out to reawaken that shame? I asked the women I met on the top of the hill if anyone had come to join them. Maggie spoke of one circle she has been part of:

> It's quite an interesting group with a common group of friends, and we're the ladies of the club and we meet for dinner about three or four times a year...real professionals, at least I consider them that.

Anna and Kathy also told of a sense that women were starting to come together, of hearing a voice that said, "you are not alone":

> It was always interesting to have lunch with other women who were lawyers because then there was this moment when you felt you were yourself again because they could be themselves.
>
> I think more and more women 'are' developing substantial relationships, and I just think that's the only way we're going to have the strength to really push at some of the blocks that we're facing.

Perhaps some of the more unexpected visitors on the hill were a few brave men. Casey, in her third marriage, spoke with a deep appreciation of having found a partner who not only accepted her professional dreams, but "believes in education and that it's just a right to have a career." Perhaps of significance is the fact that he is a Master's prepared engineer. This fits with a later comment she made, suggesting that possibly the younger, more educated men may be open to a new way of being with women, a way that values those women's contributions:

I'd say most of the males I have met in the last

> couple of years who are psychologists or who are training to be psychologists, the majority of them are pretty good. I think especially the younger ones who are students seem to have a sense of equality and some understanding of gender issues.

Maggie, who grew up in an even earlier generation than Casey, agreed that the younger generation of men may be different, more able to understand the plight of women:

> Some of the feelings that I would speak about quite openly to my female friends, I wouldn't bother to try anymore with some of my male friends because--this is a terrible thing to say--most of them simply wouldn't understand? I'm convinced it's a generational thing. I see that in the 55-plus range, but I do not see it in the 25 to 35 age range nearly as much.

What did Angela, the youngest in the group of ten, say? She did not address her relationship with men in particular in terms of them supporting her work, but she was perhaps including at least some of that when she made this comment:

> All my colleagues are--I think I have a very good relationship with all of them...very supportive, really good relationships. A lot of people I work with closely are friends as well, so it's nice.

It would appear, then, that attitudes toward the value of women may be changing in a positive direction. Yet, it is probably naive to think that one can make such a blanket statement, as some women have indicated and as I will discuss in my final chapter. The search for worth, and the battle with those who threaten to rob us of it, is certainly not new for women, and it remains to be seen if there can be a way for all persons, both men and women, to find meaning and purpose in their lives. At this moment, however, I refuse to rush ahead for I simply want to sit and enjoy the panoramic, hilltop view, feeling the joy of being connected with others who I believe understand just how far we all have come.

Reflections on the question. As I sit here in this circle, surrounded by the comfort of common understanding, I reflect on the voices that have been spoken through this fourth theme. They have said, "Be still and listen to the music of thine own soul. Celebrate it's melody and it's harmony." They have said, "There is power in being a woman"; "you can be you--being female doesn't have to mean being limited in one's choices." They have said "Being professional is more about doing your best and engaging all of yourself in a task." They have said "You can come out of hiding for you are not alone." I can more clearly imagine now where Maggie's footprints might lead, though I am enraptured by all that I cannot yet see. We have not finished our journey; we are simply attempting to integrate all that we have experienced thus far.

I come now to the end of this discussion of themes, and as I do, I sense a number of feelings in the midst of me. I am deeply touched by the honesty and integrity of the voices I have heard. They have come from women whose faces are now much more real to me, whose lives are much more blended with mine than I at the beginning of the study thought they could be. I feel respect for the women's willingness to break down their walls of silence to the degree that they felt safe in doing. Through their openness, I have learned what I sought to know.

I had wanted to understand how being professional has influenced our lives as females. This specific question did get answered. However, before elaborating on that answer below, there were two emerging dynamics of the study which serve to broaden the context under which the answer can be understood, and which therefore need to be discussed here. First, it was not simply a one-sided influence. Taking a professional pathway and being female appeared to have recursive influences. The journeys whereby the feminine as well as the professional were developed emerged as parallel, with new insights in one effecting change and growth in the other. I acknowledge that this reciprocal relationship between one's internal realizations and one's external behavior is not specific to women, or even to professional women. It could be said to represent the rhythmic nature of growth for any individual. However, the voices of the women I joined with here clearly support that there is a unique component to being female and pursuing a professional lifestyle, and that that uniqueness has to do with being in a position where an essential part of self must be constantly defended.

Adding to this, the second dynamic which emerged as the women answered the question was that it was not even just pursuing a professional path which influenced the loss of the feminine. There was also the power of cultural as well as early family messages which tended to place the feminine in subordination. Despite this plural influence, however, the important point in terms of this study is that pursuing professional status, as it then existed, became a way of proving those messages wrong. In the end, the messages were really just reinforced and exacerbated because they kept women alienated from remembering their own dreams.

Going back to the actual question, and summarizing the answer I heard, the women told of learning from a very early age that "doing" and "meeting the expectations of others" were most important. They spoke also of being taught elementary lessons on where they stood in terms of their relative worth as females. Those learnings, in conjunction with messages that said "I was expected to become some sort of professional", could be that connection that the women, in taking me back to their childhoods, were trying to make. That does not negate the strong possibility that even at a young age, the girls knew, as I had, of their desire to teach others, to see justice done, to provide care for those who were ill, to help others get their lives back on track--all skills which can be practiced through professional work. But it seems that somehow these dreams of teaching, caring, and helping others got all mixed up with their need to "prove" worth, and that need then took over as the women tried to survive in the only way they had been taught. "Professional status" became more than just a "way to be"; it may also have become a "way to get." Perhaps it is one of those life paradoxes, however, that in the intensity to prove one thing, the women began to see that they were working against the very thing they were trying to gain. What they were attempting to gain was their self-respect and the freedom to be who they knew they were. I think they began to see that being professional did not have to mean denial of their femaleness; rather, that professional work could heighten and nurture their total self through integration of their feminine strengths. Their professional and personal journeys could coincide in such a way that would finally help them realize the dreams of their youth. Those dreams were then realized, even at this later time, through both the claiming of the inner self, and then being with and getting to re-know that self.

The second goal, a more minor one, I had wanted to accomplish in my inquiry was to deliberately provide a time for the women to reflect on their own process, and if change was wanted, to find those touchstones within themselves that would tell them where they needed to go. A few comments from the women may help in deciding if indeed the inquiry did do this. Anna, Kathy, Katie, and Casey, respectively, shared this about their experience with the interviews:

> This is the way you would write in your journal, I think, if you were trying to work through some of these things. And I don't have time to do that, so what I was really reading was my journal.
> Your study was very well-timed in terms of my own attempts to figure it out for myself...At some point I expect to be writing an article.
>
> It's good to talk out loud about these things because there isn't often that opportunity. You might reflect on your career goals and things but there isn't this enormous opportunity.
>
> It was like through doing this I already was beginning to break that isolation.

In terms of my own process, I will discuss that further in the closing epilogue. However, I do wish to say here that the opportunity to meet with these women and to approach the discussion of our conversations in this way, has brought a realness and an enthusiasm back into my learning experience. I feel less confused about me. I also feel less alone, for when I risked taking my blinders off, I found that there were others who understood my experience. I feel the humility and the comfort of just being human, a comfort that has enabled authenticity rather than the alienation of falsity. It's that sense of now knowing more about what I, as that young child, didn't know how to know. That child no longer sits beside me: she now lives in my soul.

DISCUSSION AND LINKS WITH EXISTING UNDERSTANDINGS

Be not afraid of growing slowly, be
afraid only of standing still.

- Chinese Proverb (cited in Running Press, 1991)

I have a confidence now that I have gone to where I needed to go, to find out about that which I sought to know. I have that confidence because what I have heard feels real, not in the sense that it confirmed my own subjective experience although I can't deny the value of that validation, but in the sense that I believe the women spoke their experience in the most honest and valid way they could. We as women are only beginning to acquire a language which will enable us to articulate an experience that is complex, sometimes fuzzy and just beyond our grasp, that evolves even as we live it. Yet, despite this infancy, I feel I have been taken even beyond what I had hoped to learn. I believe that in a sense the women too were surprised with how much they "remembered" as they listened to their own inner voices. It is true that they struggled with the question, but, at the same time, I felt that their wisdom was simmering just below the surface. Perhaps as I had realized when my child and adult self began to question the reasons behind their anger and sadness, these women too found that their answers were not that far away. They may have been waiting for a safe enough place to begin bringing the answers out. Ironically, possibly I was creating that safe place for myself in initiating the inquiry.

I think the safety came in knowing that we as co-participants were approaching our dialogue in such a way that would go beyond brief description and concretized moments in our lives, that would honor our day-to-day experience, that would recognize our struggles and our process. We trusted that the approach would not divide us anymore into pieces, although I admit that sometimes I had to fight with a voice that said, "where are you going with this"? Even as I fought to trust the process, however, I don't think I could have anticipated just how powerful the inherent affirmations were going to be in drawing me into the lifeworlds of these ten women, if not also into my own.

As I begin to leave (at least physically) these lifeworlds of my fellow travellers, there are two main issues which I have a need to spend additional time with here. The first is the underlying theme of development--of voice, of the feminine--that appeared to pervade the women's entire narrative. It was that sense of moving from an external to an internal definition, from a place of dishonor to a place of honor, from a place of hiding and darkness to a place of recognition and light. It was a re-discovery that was to parallel a redirection and redefinition of the professional journey.

The second issue also has a developmental element to it, but it speaks to more than just a personal process; it addresses a whole new generation of thought on just how the feminine fits in with the evolution of a total self. It is a way that refuses to place the feminine on the opposite end of a dichotomous line of gendered existence; rather, it claims to want to free self from all those old tapes which have delineated it's ability to just be human.

In my efforts to further understand these two emerging issues, I felt a need to go back to the scholarly literature, and contrary to my first attempt in going there, at this point I had a desire to do so. Some of the literature that the issues brought me back to existed when I was conceptualizing my inquiry. Yet, it was not literature that I would have known to search out, for at that early point I could not have realized the breadth of what I was to learn. It is literature which I did not have specific enough parameters for in my initial search. While I remain feeling justified in my earlier critique, based on the limitations of my preunderstandings, I admit that I now have a new appreciation for the role that documented research can play. I specifically have growing respect for the postmodern writers who are bravely trying to integrate the personal and academic realms of their knowing.

Development of Voice, of the Feminine

With regard to the first issue emerging out of the women's narratives, the development of voice and of the feminine, though I do not consider the two domains exclusive, I will discuss them separately. My reason for doing so is because I believe it was first through reclaiming of the inner voice that the women were able to make access to their feminine; that is, I believe the voice was a medium through which the feminine could re-emerge.

Development of the voice. With regard to voice, the loss of such for women has been well documented as a consequence of their political, economic and social oppression (Bardwick, 1971; Cohen, 1983; National Council on Welfare, 1990; Page, 1987). The effect of that oppression on the value women place on their right to assert their voice has also been well studied (Crowley Jack, 1991; Gayton, Havu & Baird, 1983). What I wish to discuss here is what that experience of loss was like for the women I interviewed, and what process they went through in reclaiming it.

To give a meaningful frame to this discussion, I wish to bring in three major studies (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Mikel Brown & Gilligan, 1992; LaFramboise, 1993) which address that process of loss and re-discovery of voice for women, and then use those studies to give meaning to the stories as narrated to me by the women I interviewed.

The first study, Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind, by Field et al. (1986), is a classic text on the development of voice for women. Here the authors provide a masterful insight into how women's sense of self moves from being shaped by the voice of external authority (received knowledge), to a moving inside, rebelling against the gendered confines and listening to one's own authority or voice (subjective knowledge). It is in that inner space that the woman then attempts to ferret out the "truths" about her self (procedural knowledge), and matures to a place where her knowing is an integration not only of her inner voice, but also of that wisdom which she has acquired from others (constructed knowledge). The authors describe this as an evolutionary process whereby the woman comes to recognize that her inner reality, in being denigrated, has in effect been silenced. The silencing has been rigidly reinforced by cultural sanctions which tell her that girls are to "love, honor and obey." It's in the rebelling against such constraints where she begins to feel the wisdom of her own authority.

A second study which speaks to that loss and reclaiming of voice was completed by Mikel Brown and Gilligan in 1992. The authors focussed on young girls only, and found that the journey away from feelings, from internal knowing, had already begun in those formative years as their sense of self became quite externalized. The girls described how as children they had become "intensely aware of [how others reacted] to their voices and actions" (p. 45), and how hurt they were by the public taunts and ridicule infested on them when they did speak their voice. They told of the wounds to their relational self when their "wishes, ideas, or feelings were not listened to" (p. 52). It was a pattern that was to continue into adolescence where they often kept their feelings and ideas silent in fear of what reaction actually expressing them might cause. This ignoring of their voice eventually confuses them about the authenticity of it, and they begin to vacillate between feeling they know but don't know; between disconnecting and feeling numb, and connecting and feeling that in the chaos, they are "losing [their] mind" (p. 123). They begin to see more clearly that dissonance between what happens in public and what is felt in private, and because they have learned that what they feel in private has typically not been honored, they build a wall around themselves to protect what little honor they have been able to hold on to. It is the agitation of having to live this public/private split that in the end mobilizes them to resist, to fight that social "reality" (p. 168) of their gender with the power of what they know from their own experience.

The third study by LaFramboise (1993) focuses on how six female wounded healers in the ministry reclaimed an inner voice that had been denied and ignored, often from the beginnings of their childhood. LaFramboise provides a very thorough description first of how the voice of these women was wounded, and then, of how it was healed. The wounds came when as young girls, they attempted to cope with their parents' rejection and emotional abandonment by withdrawing and isolating their voice, and/or by going to great lengths to have it validated through the acceptance and approval of others. Seeing that such efforts did not get them the approval they wanted, the women described how they responded by trying even harder to gain that approval by cultivating the ideal image of what they thought others expected of them. This emphasis on image led to living an incongruency between the real and ideal self that effectively masked that real self. The turn toward healing for these women came when they were able to reach inside to voice and acknowledge their pain, and to honor those wounds in a therapeutic context. Again, as in Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's study (1986), the inner voice was affirmed only when the women took the risk of speaking an existence which before had been relegated to a place of secrecy and silence.

The stories as told through these three studies fit very well with the development of voice as described by the women I met. As a young girl, Maggie had talked about how she learned very quickly what girls could and could not say. Jacklyn spoke of how her adolescence was made difficult because of the fact that she did not fit the typical female image. Peg told of how her father's views on what a woman's role could be silenced at first her wish to be a physician as well as a mother and wife. Doris spoke of the emotional abandonment she felt when she realized her father had preferred she had been a boy. These external voices of authority "told them who they could be." Their acceptance of such prescription would explain their confusion later in life when, faced with the many rules attached to the various roles they came to fill, they felt torn by the demands and didn't know who to be. Succumbing to those external standards of the "ideal self" to gain acceptance, as LaFramboise reported, would also explain why the need to succeed in the outer world became so very important.

It was through that move inward, however, what Belenky et al. called subjective knowing, that the internal authority was valorized. It was a time when the women described their reference point shifting from other to self. Casey and Anna talked about fighting back, getting "off the beaten path", taking abrupt turns in their road. Jacklyn spoke of realizing that she was "not being true to [her] inner deeper self." Kathy told of leaving the private practice of law and moving to an organization whose "goals [she] held dear." For Peg, it was the daunting voice of her father that was silenced rather than her own when she reapplied to medical school, knowing that that was the only work she really wanted to do. This attention to the inner feeling world, to the voices that emerged when reflecting on the hill was where I believe the women began to hear their own truths and integrate all that they had learned (procedural and constructed knowledge). Kathy felt "the tremendous power of being a woman." Kassandra realized that she "want[ed] to be known as an individual, [and] not as a female necessarily." There is the sense, then, that when the inner reality was recognized, there was movement in terms of how the feminine was viewed. It was a view that was less focused on what others expected, and more present with what the women had processed themselves.

Development of the feminine. As the voice is honored and brought out into the open, it seems to then successively open the way for the expression of that which is felt in the core of one's being. Part of that core is the creativity, the connected and intuitive knowing, the inner feeling world that I have previously defined as the feminine. This process of reclaiming those essences entailed moving from a narrower definition of the physicalness of being female, to the more internal sense of the feminine archetype, and then toward integration of that feminine into a whole, integrated self.

To illustrate that process, the reader may recall from theme one the external messages which threatened to keep the little girl within the "proper" boundaries of her femaleness. Kathy had talked about how her femaleness had been defined in relation to men, to children; how it had been confirmed through physiological processes such as menstruation and childbirth. Anna had learned that her most important roles as a girl were to be a wife and mother, and Maggie had been taught that girls could only do certain things, talk a certain way. Jacklyn, as well as Anna, told of their humiliation and despair when they felt they didn’t fit within the criteria of what young girls were supposed to look like. The lack of ownership of self cut into their souls and strangled any permission they might have felt to own and define themselves. The sense that they were to meet these external expectations in order to gain approval and acceptance was a very strong message, and one which they carried into adulthood. Anna described her "driving need" to always do her best, and for others to know that she had. For Maggie and Doris, there was the pain of realizing that maybe their fathers had preferred they had been boys, and Doris in particular shared how suspecting that, had influenced her to "be relied on to do a lot of things", possibly to make up for being "just a girl." When they entered the workplace and heard all those same messages but in exacerbated form, the wounds to the feminine cut even deeper.

The women essentially described a process whereby their femaleness had always been subjected to the standards of other. In her book, Engendered Lives: A New Psychology of Women's Experience, Kaschak (1992) supports this premise. She notes that "current gender arrangements [are such that] the masculine always defines the feminine...with the feminine never [being] permitted to stand alone" (p. 5). There is the sense that the feminine can exist only in contrast to what it isn't, rather than what it is. Kathy said, "my definition of myself as a woman would have been reactive rather than generated from some internal sense of what a woman was. It was reactive to what boys did." With the emphasis on definition by other, it would make sense that that definition was based on what the other could externally see, on the physical uniqueness of women.

Kaschak (1992) espouses this belief that the feminine has been limited to a physiological and physical entity which is "consistently being evaluated and judged...by how well it pleases...the desires of the perceiver, such as power, control, or a narcissistic wish for centrality" (p. 111). Thus, for example, it makes sense that Kathy and Jacklyn would have felt the embarrassment and shame of not measuring up, physically, to the acceptable standards of such an evaluation. There were no alternatives being offered as to what else being a female might mean. Their bodies became "a product to be used and manipulated rather than an existence to be developed and experienced fully" (Kaschak, p. 112). Kathy, in her letter to her daughter, tried to explain the degradation she felt at having to play this game:

> As I got older--junior high--the whole sex thing started. We had dances at school, and wanted to look pretty so the boys would choose us. We begged for nylons, real girdles, and special skirts and sweaters. I hated it all, but treasured the few attentions I got from boys, even though they weren't 'popular'.

This externalization and "disembodiment" of what being female meant would explain the women's comments about feeling like a part of them "was lost", "was missing." It was a fragmentation that influenced them to believe that their femaleness could exist only "out there" and not also "in here." The young girl who yearns to trust instead has her trust violated. She perhaps feels too alone to question the system that has assigned these gender values to her; rather, she questions herself for not adhering to those values. In her need for acceptance and approval, she succumbs to the expectations and feels the pain of self-denial. It is, as suggested by Caplan (1988) and Rosewater (1987), a denial that can lead to depression, eating disorders, and addictive behaviors, all "pathologized" ways of feeding the emptiness within. Depression is one such pathology that was voiced by Maggie and Peg in this study. Maggie had described that cold, black day in November with the geese flying back and forth trying to get out. Peg recalled the time when colleagues were not understanding at all who she was "inside", a time when she thinks she was "clinically depressed."

Besides the three more major research-based studies quoted above which addressed this denial then resurgence of the feminine, there was one more section of the literature that I was drawn to which even more specifically described that connection between loss of the feminine and professional life. Some of those accounts tended to be autobiographical, such as that provided by Kaschak (1992) in the first chapter of her book. Here she talked about her experience as a psychology intern, where she described learning to "view psychological needs from a male perspective and [to] ignor[e] or pathologiz[e] those of females" (p. 2). She described the humiliation of being told to use aids such as Playboy to desensitize sexually-deviant males in sex therapy, an approach which essentially degraded her own presence as a female.

In another autobiography, written by O'Laughlin (1992), the author described her struggle as a law student in a system where the very use of language, the curriculum content, and the "hidden innuendoes" (p. 74) which female students are subjected to, are indicators that an insidious sexism still awaits women who do manage to make it through the door. While she wrote from the first person, she also discussed how the structure of the legal system denigrates the female experience in general. She cited studies (Lovell Banks, 1988; Wildman, 1988) which validate the experience of female law students who say they are often afraid to speak out in class on issues that are sexist and debasing to women. The felt need to silence the female voice for the trade-off of acceptance seems to confirm the "lesser value" of that voice.

A third personal account was by McIntyre (1987) who spoke of the incidents of sexism and anti-feminism that she experienced during her first year of teaching at Queen's University. The incidents included attacks on her use of non-sexist language in teaching classes, on her advocacy for an increase in the number of female faculty. She wrote of how she felt her needs were politicized, called deviant; of how she was scandalized on the walls of the men's washroom; of how she felt "abused" and "assaulted" (p. 14) by this trampling on her female identity. She described how she felt alone in a system that threatened to swallow her up. All three of these personal narratives, as well as the additional cited studies, attest to that continued and exacerbated denigration of the feminine in the professional workforce, in particular here, the psychology and law professions.

Aside from these autobiographical accounts, other studies I found which dealt with that connection between the professional and the feminine came in large measure not from the academic literature, but from efforts initiated by committees and gender task forces within individual professions. While the studies may not offer the depth of the individual experience that autobiographical narratives do, they do attest to the growing dissatisfaction of some women in their professional work. In one such study, (Report of the Canadian Committee on Women in Engineering, 1992), female engineers who had left the profession gave reasons such as isolation, lack of respect, and lack of value from their colleagues. They talked about feeling discriminated against in company hiring policies and in salary differentials. One woman who experienced the latter said, "I changed jobs for several reasons, but the largest one was the realization that my value would never be judged on the same scale as that of my male colleagues within that company" (p. 62). Another woman spoke, as the women I interviewed had, of feeling that there was a basic intolerance toward any different management style than the men had already entrenched in place--"women gain responsibility and higher positions in the organization by emulating men, and therefore hide their individuality in order to fit in. Organizations do not support diverse management styles" (p. 63).

Other such profession-specific studies were documented by a number of provincial law socities/law schools in Canada. In 1988, Savarese, Keet, and Sutherland surveyed women graduates of the University of Saskatchewan, and found that those women had experienced frequent discrimination, particularly from male colleagues and employers. The discrimination took such forms as being relegated to departments that tended to generate less revenue, being excluded from the powerful "boy's network." In Ontario, A Report of the Law Society of Upper Canada (1991) documented women as being "more highly represented among positions of lower authority, lower supervisory powers and lower prestige" (p. 8). In Alberta (Brockman, 1992), time demands which resulted in childbearing and childrearing difficulties, wanting to use different skills, and not liking the adversarial nature of law work were some of the common reasons quoted by women who had left the profession. One women expressed her exasperation with having "billable hours" being put in competition with her family connections--"I think that the legal profession is overly materialistic and does not value the family enough. Money and prestige is more important than relationships" (p. 21).

Perhaps the study which is hoped to bring about the most change in the legal profession for women, however, is that just released by the Gender Equality Task Force of the Canadian Bar Association (Report of the Canadian Bar Association, 1993). The Report, while recognizing that women have gained increasing entry to the legal profession, suggests that at the same time women have suffered a great cost to themselves, costs which stretch from economical issues to a deep and pervading attitude that continues to regard women as biological and sexual objects. The women spoke of feeling shamed back into silence by a backlash which belittles their complaints and calls them "whining" (p. 271). There was also that same old message that women are what their biological and sexual functions dictate them to be. The respondents talked about how very disheartening their fight for equality and respect is because of the "consensus of denial by [many] male lawyers" (p. 270).

These surveys, individually and collectively, once more support the perception that the worth of females as individuals, as well as the value of the feminine which women bring to the workplace are not recognized. The findings are in agreement with those comments voiced by my co-participants in the second theme of this inquiry--"Not Knowing Who To Be." Anna had talked about how practicing in a law firm had not allowed her to openly show emotion over her client's problems because "it wasn't appropriate in that context." She left private practice to teach at a university. Kathy described how she felt she had had to "prostitute" herself and bury her intuitive and creative ways of knowing to be accepted into the male domain. She also left private practice to head a social law agency. Perhaps both women learned that finding their place in the professional world had to be by their own standards. Any notion that worth and approval could be attained through the eyes of others had to be dispelled. Perhaps not all of us are entirely comfortable with possessing or acting on that new knowledge. Katie, in answer to my paraphrase about whether her education was a way to prove she was good enough, responded "Yes, Yes"! But she also described, painfully, how even after acquiring her Ph.D., she has still "never felt good enough", how that external seeking for approval elusively goads her on to do more and more--"I just never feel adequate enough." It might be fair to say then, not just for Katie, but for all of us who re-visit this place of insecurity, that based on the finding that the feminine and the professional are interconnected, we will not find real security in the one realm without also doing some growth in the other.

Fitting the Feminine Into an Integrated Self

To this point in my discussion of links with existing understandings, I believe I have shown that what has been voiced in this inquiry confirms much of what we are increasingly learning about developmental processes for women. However, it is now to the second issue, the development of an integrated self, that I wish to turn my attention. This shift seems a natural progression in a process that the women said moved from a childlike awareness of wholeness, to loss of the inner feminine, to reclaiming that feminine, to finally, a renewed, more adult sense of integration. This latter emphasis on how reclaiming of the feminine now enables women to function more holistically could be said in some ways to reflect the postmodernist emphasis on non-gendered "selves" which are free of dichotomized, stereotypical thinking. To place this development within the historical context of the feminist movement, Kristeva (1986) delineates three phases of that movement, arguing that rather than having to oppose one another, that they can co-exist in the same period of time. The three phases are:

1. Liberal feminism--access to the male symbolic order.

> 2. Radical feminism--celebration of femaleness and of difference, separation from the male symbolic order.
> 3. A move towards an imagined possibility of 'woman as whole', not constituted in terms of the male/female dualism...The desired end point is to de-massify maleness and femaleness--to reveal their multiple and fragmented nature and remove from the meaning of maleness and femaleness any sense of opposition, hierarchy, or necessary difference. This is not a move toward sameness, but towards multiple ways of being. (p. 502)

It is not my purpose here to give a detailed account of the postmodernist position; rather, I simply wish to provide sufficient discussion of some of the main concepts so as to understand where the women on the hill who said they wanted to be known more as individuals than as women, may have been taking me.

Two of the more "visual" issues that I have been able to disentangle from the highly philosophical postmodernist theory, and the two that I will discuss here, have to do with the theory's critique that gender treats women as subject, and that gender is really a socially constructed concept. On the first point, an emphasis on gender relegating woman to subject, postmodern writers argue that such attention by radical feminists has submerged rather than freed individual identity. Butler (1990) goes so far as to say that these feminists, by virtue of presuming the universality and unity of the subject of feminism, have perhaps inadvertently but effectively concealed and naturalized a political process which continues to keep women as subjects. It is a status that while it legitimates, also excludes. According to the postmodern position, the aim is not to bring death to the feminine, but rather to loosen those boundaries which have "essentialized" and restrained existence to the very places where emancipation was to bring women out of. This leads then to the second point, which is that rather than seeing the feminine/masculine as factual entities, these theorists are saying they could be more reasonably understood as social constructs constituted through the multiple experiences which the person has had (Davis, 1990; Davis & Harre, 1990; Heckman, 1990; Kaschak, 1992; Riley, 1988). Riley in particular emphasizes that continuance in such "theories of difference" (p. 113) is to block the road to self for all.

This theory as well is not without it's critics. Much of the resistance comes from radical feminists (Hite, 1989; Modleski, 1991; Reiss, 1989; Weedon, 1987; Rakow, 1985) who argue that postmodernism is simply a political effort to rationalize and intimidate women into a position that says inequality is all a big mistake, and that if we accept that we can do it all over again, we can make it perfect. It is even suggested (Weedon; Rakow) that postmodernism may be regressive for women in that in encouraging "gender blindness" (Weedon, p. 41), it will continue to mask the continuing reality of male privilege and domination. At the very least, Jameson (1984) argues that questioning the authority of the individual voice, even if it self-identifies as predominantly female, may only serve to drive that voice underground, once again. I will describe my personal leanings on this debate later in the next chapter.

Instead, I go back to the women on the hill, and try to use these postmodern concepts to understand what they said. I feel that while they have invited me to a much larger window, they at the same time may be warning me not to become too seduced by that view. It seems that we are hovering somewhere in the balance, whether in transition or simply not buying into it all, I'm not sure.

The two main ways in which I believe the women's narratives agreed with the postmodern view have to do with, first, a general sense that the women are moving through those three stages that Kristeva (1989) outlined and toward that larger frame for their identity, and second, that the external has definitely had an impact on what female has been understood to mean. In regard to the first, movement toward a larger frame of identity, I recall, for example, Kathy describing how when she and her colleagues first entered the practice of law and were confronted by the male norm, their reaction was to convince the male partners that "we were in fact the same as [them]." I remember Jacklyn's comment about how she began to realize she "wasn't being true to her inner, deeper nature", and how that meant having to leave a work situation that she felt did not honor that inner sense of being. I think of Kassandra's clear statement that she wanted to be known as "an individual, not as a female necessarily." These collectively indicate a progression of moving from a liberal feminist stance where the emphasis was on, in this case, "pretending" to access the male order, through radical feminism where the devalued feminine was revalued, to a place of wanting to experience self as a non-dichotomized whole. In this sense, then, the women spoke to this postmodernist shift in their individual consciousness. It was a shift which brought them to a sense of integration and maturity.

A second way in which the postmodern stance coincided with the women's experience was that sense of how external constructions of gender had indeed influenced who they thought they as females could be in society. Both Kathy and Jacklyn voiced their confusion about who they were as girls when their physical proportions did not fit the stereotype of what proper women were to look like. Peg spoke of her puzzlement of "[not knowing] who else to be" when her father explained her options as being fulfilled either as a physician or as a woman, with no possibility that she might find meaning through both at the same time. Angela voiced her agitation at lawyers whom she felt assumed that she as a female social worker would copy their papers and do other menial tasks for them. So, yes, the postmodernist argument would appear to have relevance here in terms of the strong influences of social prescription (Ferree & Hess, 1985).

What's more, it was not only in reference to their female identity that the postmodern view applied. The women described how the potency of external norms also extended into their professional lives, and this is where the tie between femaleness and professionalism once more comes back in. They talked about how they were beginning to redefine professional as an attitude rather than as just a position, how professional now had more connotation of "being" than "doing." As I have discussed earlier, there was this interdependent process between development of the feminine/self identity and the professional identity. That parallel process was confirmed in the recent dissertation findings of Robb (1993). She wrote that the "process of deciding [often] require[s] reflection, sorting through of values and lifestyle priorities" (p. 52). It is a process that evolves in "a dynamic tension, rather than a dichotomous distinction between the personal and the professional" (p. 55).

I believe at this point, however, that the women take some exception to the postmodernist stance. I don't think they are saying that their existence as little girls was completely constituted as a result of social definition. They were, in fact, quite clear that there was a core self all along which fought such outside constraint. Maggie had said, "I don't ever remember thinking I wish I could fit in. I do remember thinking, I wish they'd understand that this is the way I am"! Casey's comment, "it was a feeling like...that's who I was inside and that it was trying to express itself, but it didn't know how to come out", also speaks to the existence of a core self that was already in place, even if it not yet been nurtured enough to speak its existence clearly. This does not mean that they were bent on making that self different from what they saw men experience, although for some women, and at some times, that too may have seemed necessary. I had more the sense that the women just wanted who they knew they were to be recognized, and that that self may have happened to deviate from the presiding male norm in some ways. In other words, it was not the difference that was most important, but rather the essence of who they were, which may have just happened to be different. The anger at a system that did not value that important part of self may have made it necessary to emphasize that part and radicalize it's existence--not for antagonizing reasons, but simply for survival. I think Minh-ha (1989) in her book Woman, Native, Other, explained this point well in proposing that it is not so much the gender difference that may exist that is key, but how that difference is distributed. In other words, that women are not the "authority" on the feminine, but rather that they may possess it in a greater way than men.

When in my final meeting with the women I asked them their views on the postmodernist philosophy as it related to their own lives, Casey replied, "I wouldn't have rebelled if that was all I was [i.e., a socially constructed being]. I was not just this passive being...it was a more active process than that. I knew what fit and what didn't fit." Anna shared how she doesn't personally see how such a theoretical extrapolation could speak to the spiritual core, that soul that seems so individually felt and defined.

I acknowledge that there could be other interpretations of this discrepancy between what the women I met said, and what the postmodernist view presupposes. For example, when the women rested on the hill and learned about new ways to be, it would appear that for some the reframe was more recognizing that there were other ways to connect with their femaleness, while for others it was learning that a strong anima could exist alongside a strong animus. Possibly then the women were just at different stages of development. Another possibility is that for those women who support more the radical feminist view, it is reasonable that they might fear that subverting the feminine into an amassed form of self might cast them back into the abyss of alienation and separation that they had just struggled so hard to get out of. This is in fact my fear. I feel that my reconnection with my feminine is so new that I don't want to let that intensity go yet. At the same time, I also feel that there is a sense that I'm moving into a bigger space than I've been. So there is a tension there for me. Perhaps the tension is more indicative of my not being able to separate myself from the dichotomous way of thinking that has been ground into me, as Cixous and Clement (1986) suggest, but I don't think so for I feel that I am speaking more from the power of my experience than from the knowledge of my mind.

Just as the relationship between professionalism and female development is not clean, so also I can't see that this road toward postmodernist thinking will be without its difficulties. I believe women are thinking it through. It makes sense that in this transition to postfeminist thought, we wouldn't all be at the same stage, as Kristeva (1986) suggested. It may be that we want to tarry longer in a place where there is a great deal of comfort. I don't think we need to hurry, for perhaps for the first time in our lives we can believe that it is okay just to be with all that is not yet clear to us. Snitow (1989) put it this way:

> A common divide keeps forming in both feminist thought and action between the need to build the identity 'woman' and give it solid political meaning, and the need to tear down the very category woman and dismantle its all too solid history...Feminists, and indeed most women, live in a complex relationship to this central feminist divide. From moment to moment, we perform subtle psychological and social negotiations about just how gendered we choose to be. (p. 37-38)

Perhaps that is just the place to which this inquiry has taken us. It may be a place where we are learning not only what it might mean to be self, but also a place where we reflect on how we will connect that self to a work that plays a major part in our lives. These are not easy decisions for there is not yet a great deal of support for breaking away from norms that have heretofore preserved the "order" in our worlds. Based on the following discussion where I identify issues that professional women continue to grapple with, it is clear that we will need to frequently remind ourselves of those things that we have learned on our journey so far, "be still", "there are other ways to be", "gather a circle around you." This sense of moving back and forth, looking in and acting out, I think speaks to the growth through connection that women have often expressed (Jordan & Surrey, 1986; Kaplan & Surrey, 1984). It is a connection that will be of utmost importance if we are to deepen our experience on the road to self.

IMPLICATIONS FOR A GENERATION

"Perhaps we share stories in much the same spirit that explorers share maps, hoping to speed each other's journey, but knowing that the journey we make will be our own."

- *Gloria Steinem (cited in Hazelden Educational Materials, 1992).*
American feminist writer

We--I, the ten women on the hill--"have" shared a journey. It was not a journey that already had a map; rather, it was one where we drew the way as we travelled along. The map was webbed with paths that while individual, also drew together places that were common. In the drawing together, there was created a way for us to better understand a lived experience that before may have eluded our understanding. Through the strength of our collective voice, we have begun to find a language to express that which we may have felt inside for some time, but didn't know how to tell. Yet, perhaps the most wonderful thing about this common process is, because the telling emerged out of the intimacy of our personal process, we have been able to honor those spaces along the way which have made the journey our own.

It is perhaps common for anyone who has taken this road back to self to want to share something of her journey with others. I, as well as the women in this inquiry, wish to do that. We are not saying that having come to the end of this stage in our inquiry means we have figured everything out as to how our life histories have influenced us. But I believe we do have a deeper respect for how interconnected various aspects of our lives are, and how painful it has been when we've pretended they are not connected. Also, I don't think we are so presumptuous as to think that the next generation of professional women will want to follow our footsteps exactly. Perhaps we simply hope that the sharing of our lifeworlds will in some way pass on a torch that shines a little brighter than the one our mothers and forebearers felt able to pass on to us.

With whom do we want to share our experiences? One group would be those future inquirers who out of their own journeys may want to extend beyond that which we have questioned here. Secondly, there are therapists and educators who will be working with professional women, and we believe we have something important to share with these people. Third and fourth, while we want to bequeath to the next generation of women a sense of what we now know how to know, we acknowledge that we may yet need to continue working through those thoughts and feelings which are unresolved for ourselves.

First, to those who will inquire after, I feel a need to speak first from my voice, but I don't think the voices of my co-participants would be that far removed. I want to say that I feel I have truly experienced what it is like to trust the validity of beginning with one's own inner stirrings, and to sense that wonder which can happen when one realizes that one's knowing and learning is about more than what occurs in one's head. I didn't know that before this inquiry, or I hadn't remembered. The value of the subjective, phenomenological process in teaching me and in "making" me remember has been immeasurable.

I also want to share my thoughts on what it took for me to make this learning process happen. It meant that I could not hold anything back, or that I did so at the expense of depth in what I was endeavoring to understand. That is, there were times when I would keep some piece of my experience aside, either consciously or unconsciously, as I was typing, but upon reading over what I had written, I would feel, "no, it was much more than that. I cannot tell it in any other way than how it was." I suppose one needs to be respectful of the boundary of privacy between self and other; yet, I found that once I started to open the doors on my "hidden" reality, I wanted only to bathe in that openness. I no longer wanted to censure it.

Joining back with the voices of the ten women, I believe we leave with questions that others, in listening to their own inner stirrings, may want to take beyond what we have learned here. Some wonderings we are left with are: Do we just continue our exodus from patriarchal institutions or do we go back and try to change the systems themselves? How do we reach out in a respectful way to other women who may be bleeding inside but not feel safe enough yet to let down their wall? Understanding more now about how to make our dreams come true, how do we keep that connection alive when confronted with shadows which still threaten? Possibly there is a passion in another soul which these wonderings will spark.

The second group with whom we wish to share our experience are educators and therapists. We remember our pain at not having our other ways of knowing recognized by those professionals. In a sense, they have inadvertently taken our power away from us. While we have compassion for and understanding of the mechanics which may have underlied their doing so, our hope is that in reading about our experience, they will attempt to break from those traditions. I personally don't think this will necessarily be easy or without risks, for in my own present teaching experience of undergraduates, I have already been confronted by one student who wanted me to accept that she "did not come to university to learn about [her]self, but to learn academics"! This was a test of my own new awareness not only of how one learns, but also of my need to be sensitive to the fact that individuals will have their own process and needs. Interestingly enough, the next day a second student from the same class came to me and said, "you were not in the room five minutes before I sensed your connectedness to your spirit. How did you get there"?

Part of being sensitive to not only my student's process, but also to my own is in knowing that our journeys continue. So, the third group with whom we may need to be open, is ourselves. It may be true that we feel a new freshness in our lives, and that our heart smiles as we think of how far we have come. Yet, there is sensitivity to wounds that bleed still within ourselves. It is not that we sorrow all of the time, for as Maggie said, "I'm almost content with myself now." Rather, having opened ourselves up to all that we are, we feel all that that has brought. We perhaps have a sense of ambivalence about where we have arrived. There were three issues that the women I travelled with spoke of struggling with yet, issues which I share: a coming to terms with and grieving decisions as well as indecisions; a struggle with their own vulnerabilities which while being very real, also frighten them for they do not know how their needs will be perceived; and, despite this wariness, at the same time a warm and compassionate desire to bring others into the circle on the hill.

The first issue, the coming to terms and grieving of decisions and indecisions, speak to that sense of internal bleeding that I sense I only witnessed the surface of in my meetings with these brave women. I believe many of us now realize and sorrow for all that we gave up along the way in our search for worth. At the beginning of this writing, I shared my tears in being separated from my girl-child, and later on told of my anguish at learning I may be too late in deciding about children. We broke a mold that carried a big price, and we weep for our losses. Katie voiced her struggle around not having yet married, and how she battles between the voice that celebrates her achievements as a Ph.D. nurse, and another which cries for other connections:

> I'm really trying to come to terms with who I am. I find it hard to come to grips with myself over not having had a long-term relationship with a male...I think that's probably the biggest disappointment in my life...When I look at my classmates and see where they're at now, I'm not sure if someone literally asked me would I prefer to be a doctorally prepared nurse that's done what I've done in nursing, or would I prefer to have raised two children? I don't know the answer to that definitely. In a way, I think raising children is an enormously great achievement.

Jacklyn also spoke of "a very sad regret that I won't have children, and probably won't be married--that's a huge regret. But then it just never happened. Can I fault myself? No, I don't think so." Her tension may be between needing to affirm the decisions she made, and the sadness that those decisions gave rise to. She admits that sometimes she gets discouraged, that there is a "better side of [her] that says, damm it, Jacklyn, why bother?", but she seems willing to give herself time to follow her journey through--"I guess I'm of the school that says, it's not always great, it's not always perfect. You got to sort of judge it over time."

How do we come to terms over time? Perhaps part of it is doing just that, allowing ourselves the time to grieve and then moving past it, as Anna expressed:

> You have to constantly tell yourself that, well, maybe you're not too happy about that, but [we're] going to have to give that up and go on to something else. There's a time when [we] can feel bad and worn and grieve, and then eventually [we] have to move on. If [we] can't move on, then I think [we] have real problems of depression or neurotic behavior that goes on for years and years.

Perhaps another part is realizing that while the professional world may have exacerbated our believing that we had to abandon our female side, I think as Katie suggested, we also have to be courageous enough to look deeper at hurtful experiences that we may have had even before we entered the professional domain:

> Part of the feeling of not being good enough has been a personal struggle just in terms of who Katie is and her background and her early experience, and part of it is being in a profession that is looked down on and is not as good as medicine.

Indeed it will demand courage, for sometimes that depth of change necessitates leaving behind those safety niches where we have planted ourselves, and we may worry about what that will mean in terms of our "success." It may mean leaving a job, even for a while, amidst familial and societal voices that remind us that that is where our identity is. It may mean dealing with confrontation, if not at least with our own responsibilities. It will mean for once not making our needs for intimacy, creativity and connection of lower priority than our professional pursuits. That may require us to choose "average" rather than "excellent" as an okay place to be. These are decisions which will become increasingly difficult to make as demands of employers surmount and as our country's economy remains in a recession. Kassandra spoke of how she continues to battle with that cross-purpose that comes when professional and personal needs arise at the same time--"that was my panic last night at ten o'clock when I found out I'm going to be working. Oh no, I have all these things I wanted to do. When am I going to fit them in now"? It seems that maybe for those of us who find ourselves in this conflict, our journey may need to loop back to that time when we rejected the message that we had to be either person or professional, when we fought for our right to perhaps be both.

This tension that continues to pull professional women in opposing directions leads me to the second issue that I heard the women tell me was not completely resolved for them. They spoke of their uncertainty about just how much attention they could pay to their inner needs and still be considered "good" at their professions. Where one voice says, "I will not let this new feeling of life go", another says, "but you're not going to measure up." Doris spoke of the struggle for her around this:

> But you see, the other side is having credibility as a professional. I mean, it's one thing to have credibility as a person, and you know, oh yeah, she's a really nice person, not very bright or not doing, or not achieving much.

Maybe it's the same old shadow of will we have value in just being ourselves? Again, we travel back to where we need to, to hear and feel that surge within ourselves that reminds us of our inherent value.

I think a corollary of this uncertainty of how attentive to be to our needs, is how vulnerable can we be in connection with others, and to what extent do we have to defend our own independent interests? This has been a struggle for me for I have a real fear based on " when I've let others into my world before, they've abused it" (from my personal journals). I understand Maggie's fear of being vulnerable with men--"they always want to be on a personal basis. They always want to look after you? Hell, I don't need looking after; they need looking after, many of them"! I understand that as a need to show that we are not dependent on them, with maybe some residual anger over us having had to cater to their needs at the expense of our own. Yet, I'd like to suggest that possibly we have forgotten our interdependence. I can also understand Katie's need to secure her hard-won independence through financial means--"I would be very concerned about giving up my earning power." I understand the lack of trust we have at this point. There is a sense that "younger, more educated men seem more respectful", as Casey suggested, and that younger professional women may "have fewer obstacles", and may have to "fight less to achieve [their] goal", as Angela described. Yet, Kathy cautioned that:

> What I [have] learned very painfully [is] that men have learned to appropriate the new politics, and the most dangerous men wear the sheep's clothing of political correctness to hide their contempt of women. Real respect by men of women is a long way off"!

It is perhaps that same distrust that radical feminists feel when confronted with the arguments of the postmodern theorists. In my voice, it would sound something like, "If I shift my eyes, will I lose my place on the road"?

How can we relax our eyes enough to feel safety in looking out again beyond self? In the third issue that the women spoke of in regard to their ongoing process, the desire to invite others to join us on the hill, I relearned about the human need to be part of, to belong, to feel connected. These ten women with whom I travelled have reminded me that despite my fears that I will be shamed back into silence, fears that have been validated through my actual experience in sharing this inquiry with some, there is also a validity in realness, in authenticity. One must decide which side one is ready to stand on. As Anna suggested, maybe it will be in those few but precious times when we feel our realness returned that we will garner the strength to stand on the side of honesty:

> There's a realness because I'm being my real self, and perhaps there are other professional people and maybe they are also more comfortable being real and it feels like when you're talking about something, you're really, you're connecting. You really are talking.

What do we yet have to do to realize this fortification as we embark on the rest of our journey as professional women? Perhaps, as Jacklyn implies, we have to realize that nobody has it all figured out--"that's one of my more pessimistic [times]. I cycle like that and I'm not denying that I don't." Perhaps it means we can look at the women gathered on the hill and realize that though our pain and doubts may not have been spoken aloud, there is a commonality in our experience that can move and touch us. Kathy talked of how beginning to see the struggles of women more systemically loosened those bounds she beat herself with:

> I see it less personally now--I see it more systemically. I see how big it is...how it's something that's not my fault...that it's not something I can even do much to affect. So that takes some of the pressure off...there's less self-flagellation as a result of this.

Maybe it means that we must challenge our "insecurity with who we are [that tries to convince us that we don't] have an awful lot to offer", as Kassandra says, and "develop substantial relationships with other women" who might be searching for just that one person with whom she can trust enough to disclose to, as Kathy believes. Possibly it means that we need to understand that not all professional women will agree, or be at the same place in their understanding. Doris voiced,"[maybe there are women] who like their role or who are scared to give up their role because then what is there for them"? Perhaps it's always keeping in mind that we are not finished yet, that we can grieve while also envisioning hope that we can steer our road in more empowering directions. Maggie has captured that vision as she stands on the hill--"The need to become what I'm still working on, because that's not finished yet"!

From my own painful learning, I can perhaps for the first time in my life stand with Maggie and say that that's okay, that we probably won't ever finish, or have all life's struggles neatly worked out. In fact, I feel it has been more in those fluid times when I have grown the most. Different from when I began this inquiry, I can now honor that state of not having to have a neat answer, for I now remember the value of just letting my life happen rather than trying to control its happening. By admittance, however, this has been a very painful lesson for me to have learned. My learning continues.

In addition to future inquirers, educators and therapists, as well as ourselves, there is also a fourth group with whom we feel we have something to offer. I move now to that fourth group, the next generation of professional women. While we realize that they will travel their own journeys as Gloria Steinem has suggested, we cannot help but hope that the baring of our brokenness here on these pages will ease the hurts that we expect they will yet also experience. So as we sign off now, we leave these, our heartfelt words, with them:

From Anna: "My hope is that you not think you have to give up being yourself."

From Angela: "I hope for a better rap in terms of being respected for making your own choices."

From Kassandra: "My wish is that there will be room for a different kind of structure of organization that will allow you to slow your pace in getting to the job you want, that will allow you to take time off to be with your family. My hope is that you will do it your way, that you will feel free to drop that facade that we wear to the public."

From Katie: "My desire is that you will not concentrate on using men as your norm, but rather learn as much as you can about your femaleness; that you will be respected for what you bring as a woman into the professional world."

From Casey: "My wish is that you will not have to forge your own path. It's too hard."

From Jacklyn: "I hope that you will be able to find an environment that you're comfortable in, that you will learn what your strengths are and be able to contribute in a way that builds on those."

From Maggie: "Please trust yourself. You've got far more to offer than you think you do."

From Peg: "I could only hope that the fact you're a woman will not be the first thing that is seen when you approach a counsellor, when you're applying for a job--that that will be secondary to who you are and to your ability to do the job."

From Doris: "I hope that you are able to talk about what's going on in your life so that in bringing up children, they will not inherit any baggage you may have brought."

From Kathy: [As spoken to her daughter] "My dream is that you will know that powerful center of yourself that is a woman. Then, no matter what you do, you will be professional. You will address your life with meaning, commitment, and the sure knowledge that you are a whole and wholesome person."

From Colleen, I want to say all of the above. And yet I also want to tell you just from me, "I hope that in your lives you will have the same rich opportunity as I have had here to travel, even for a short while, with ten such wonderful companions"!

EPILOGUE

"The real voyage of discovery consists not
in seeking new landscapes, but in
having new eyes."

(cited in Hazeldon Educational
Materials, 1992)

By D. Carlyle

I am standing now in a much different place than when I began. How to describe it...a lump in my throat, a lightness in my heart, a song on my lips, my dreams once more alive. I live day to day in fighting to stay on that course. The old tapes wake me at night, and I struggle to eject them and put in a new tape. I no longer feel a need to run away from those old ways, but in my wholeness now know a growing strength in confronting them. That does not mean I am no longer afraid to confront, but rather that I am more able to stay with that struggle and talk with the frightened child in my soul. I know her intuitively and she trusts me. And because she trusts me, I'm not only getting to know her hurts, but once again her funny ways that keep peeping out at the most unexpected moments! I listen to her creativity, and we talk about how to share that with others.

As I flip back through the pages to my preunderstandings before undertaking this inquiry, I know I have come a tremendous distance. Yet, how far I have come surprises even me when, for example, I am confronted with an angry student and am able to hear them with understanding and compassion instead of defense. My safety is less in my appearing perfect, and more in my ability to be real with those with whom I come in contact. In relation with my clients, I feel more able to go down into the dark voids of pain, for I no longer am afraid of my own pain. I reach out to friends with all of who Colleen is, rather than who I want them to think she is. In this realness, I find honor--for others as well as for myself--and that feels so incredibly wonderful!

My understanding of my feminine has now far surpassed any notion of just biological and physical definition. It now resides also in the depth of my poetry, in the stroke of my paintbrush, in the feelings of my heart, as an integral part of who I am. Any more than that, I cannot at this point tell say for there is much of the road yet to travel. I do not know what the rest of my journey may hold, but I am understanding now for the first time since I was a little girl what it is like to dream again. I am beginning to trust that I can invite others into sharing those dreams with me!

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Appendix A

Consent to Participate

I am aware that the purpose of this study is to gain understanding of how being a professional influences life as a female. The study is being conducted as a doctoral dissertation by Colleen Mac Dougall at the University of Alberta, under the supervision of Dr. Ronna Jevne, Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology.

I understand that I will be invited to share, with limited questioning, any aspect of how being a professional has influenced my life as a female. If at any time I wish not to answer a question, or to leave the study altogether, I may do so. I am aware that exploring personal feelings and thoughts, and recounting personal experiences carries with it potential for distress. If I make these concerns known to the interviewer, she will suggest resources that I may use.

I am aware that I will be asked to share my experience on the stated topic in a second way of my choosing, and that I will be asked to participate in two interviews of approximately one to two hours each. Each interview will be audio-recorded, with the tapes being kept locked in Colleen Mac Dougall's office. I understand that all information is confidential, and that it will be used for research purposes only. Transcripts from the interviews will be read by Colleen Mac Dougall and Dr. Jevne, with excerpts possibly being read by two independent advisory persons. At this time, and if any excerpts are used in the final reports, details that could reveal my identity will be changed. The tapes will be erased at the completion of the study.

I understand that besides providing me with an opportunity to reflect on my own personal lifestyle, the results could be helpful to other professional women in doing the same. If at any time I have questions about the study, they will be answered by Colleen Mac Dougall (492-5245). At my request, results will be shared with me at the completion of the study.

Based on the above statements, I agree to participate in this study.

SIGNED____________________________________ DATE______________

WITNESSED________________________________ DATE______________

Appendix B

Letter Sent to Co-participant With First Transcript

Department of Educational Psychology
6-102 Education North
University of Alberta

August 17, 1992

Dear :

Enclosed is a copy of the transcript from our first interview. To prepare for our second interview, I am hoping that you will be willing to read what you had expressed to me, and note any statements that you would like to clarify, change, or expand on in our next meeting. If you feel any further explanation would be repetitious, that is fine and you can leave the interview as is. If on the other hand you find that you have remembered experiences that you had not previously shared but would now like to, you can use the attached blank pages to jot down reminders to yourself. The notations are all for your benefit, as your verbal explanations will be captured on tape, like before. During the interview, I also may be seeking some clarification on statements you made so as to gain greater insight into your experiences around the research question. The purpose of this second interview is, again, not to impose my structure, but for me to learn more and to ensure that you have had an opportunity to validate your statements.

You may notice that there are a few questions marks and series' of dots throughout the transcript. These represent words spoken in the original tape that were not clear enough for transcription.

I look forward to meeting you again, , and I thank you for the time you are committing to this timely study. I do hope that you are finding the experience enlightening, and that you are being left with a feeling of pride in how you have composed your life as a professional female.

Sincerely,

Colleen Mac Dougall

Appendix C

Example of Coding Process Taken From Co-participant 2

Table C-1
Description of First Level Coding Process

Excerpts Selected From Transcribed Interview	Paraphrase	1st Level Coding
1. I try to think back over my own experience, my own life, and I think probably I'd never thought there was much of an effect. As I was living my life, I didn't think of it in that way. But when I think back to specific times when I entered a profession or made a decision to become more of a professional person, then there were changes in my personal life that at the time I didn't really think of but now after the fact became conscious of.	Only realize after the fact that my profession affected my personal life	Evolution of Understanding
2. Part of my husband's opinion, I think, was that it was fine of course. I could be a professional; of course there was no problem. But I was still required to do most of the domestic things like cooking and shopping.	Husband supported me verbally but did not share in household tasks	Spouse Spouse's Expectations
3. I saw my personal life get more problematic, although I don't think at any time that was really put on the table as such. I think it was an underlying tension.	Personal life got more problematic; Didn't voice the effect on my personal life	Marital Conflict Coping Pattern
4. I never said anything any differently but I was closer to becoming a professional that he wasn't. He didn't have those qualifications. So them I became really transformed and there were lots of lawyer jokes--lawyers are really not nice people, and who would want to go to a party with a bunch of lawyers--how boring!	I wasn't any different but the closer I became to being professional, the more my husband made jokes about that profession	Marital Conflict Spouse

5. The closer I got to becoming a lawyer, which was something he was got to being a not--he was a professor--the more threatened he got and the easier it was to say that this lawyer stuff was interfering with his relationship, and so really I, because I'd decided to become a lawyer, was becoming somebody different, and he didn't like that. So what had started out as being something that I thought he supported and was happy for me to be doing because it would make the relationship better since I would have my thing and he would have his thing, then got turned around as something that I had chosen to do in order to make the relationship really awful...That what started out to be one thing got turned into something else, like it was my fault, not his.	The closer I became to being a lawyer, the more threatened my husband got; he said my professional work interferred with our relationship; my intention to make the relationship better got turned around to look like I was trying to do something to harm the relationship	Marital Conflict Feeling Betrayed Spouse
6. There would be required meetings and I wouldn't be home necessarily to fix dinner or something like that. To me that was something where I would always say, well, I can't be there and so on and so forth, and that seemed to be accepted, but after a while I don't think it was. It was a point against me.	Professional commitments meant I could not always be home to make meals; Husband accepted this on the surface but later used it against me	Role Conflict Spousal Support
7. I don't have to be the best, but I would feel terrible if anybody out there I know, people I don't know, thought I wasn't trying to do my best. That seems to be something that's a really driving need. I don't know what people would say about it psychologically, but I think that's quite present; it always has been.	Would feel bad if others thought I wasn't doing my best; to meet others' expectations a driving need	Expectations From Others Motivation
8. I would feel really bad because maybe I hadn't done my best. So what pushes me is this	Would feel bad if hadn't done my best; pushed	Expectations From

feeling that out there somewhere is someone who's depending on it, or counting on it.	by those I feel depend on me	Others Motivation
9. I was trying essentially to do--to get everything done and I didn't really have enough time.	Tried to do everything but didn't have time	Coping Pattern
10. I think it's one of those things where at the time you realize you're under a lot of pressure but you feel that you can do everything, or if you can't do everything, you won't be a good role model for maybe other people who have encouraged you to go ahead and try to do the work. You don't want to let people down.	Trying to do everything caused pressure; must do everything to be good role model; don't want to let people down	Feeling Pressure Coping Pattern Expectations of Self and From Others
11. I don't think I ever wanted to say, look, if it's making my personal life so difficult, then I'm just going to give it up, and I'm willing to stay at home for a while or whatever. But I knew deep down inside that I was getting tired.	Never considered giving up profession to ease difficulty at home; was getting tired trying to satisfy both roles	Priority Feeling Tired
12. If I had said well, this is bothering my marriage and I'm going to have to make some decisions here and my decision would be to keep the marriage and I'll give up these other things at least temporarily, I don't think that would have in the end been a key to a successful marriage. I think maybe the marriage would fail anyway, but it certainly was a contributing factor. It really did make a difference ...the fact that I was working and that I wanted a profession was a big contribution to the ending of that marriage.	Giving up profession probably wouldn't have made marriage better but was contributing factor;	Marital Conflict
13. I came to terms with the fact that I probably hadn't done what	Realized I hadn't done	Coming to Terms

I wanted to do. I probably wanted to do new work, and since my husband didn't want me to do that, there was just a lot of the meeting of the minds there, and it was perhaps best that the relationship ended although it was painful.	what I wanted; See it was best that the relationship ended	Marital Conflict Feeling Sad
14. That was my attempt to make things okay--just do more.	Tried to make things better by doing more	Coping Pattern
15. I think that it was easier for him to think that it was okay, and that that was part of my destiny, but somehow inside not willing to believe that, that once I married him I'd forget about this. This would be something I wouldn't need anymore.	Husband seemed to think after I married him, I wouldn't need profession anymore	Marital Conflict Feeling Devalued
16. I didn't want to even acknowledge that it was there. I didn't want to recognize that.	Didn't want to admit there was a problem	Coping Pattern
17. I would have had to deal with it. I would have had to confront him and say, look, this is not benefactory, and I don't want to be in a relationship in which I'm supposed to be--because of some social idea that you have about what wives do and what husbands do--give up something that's really important to me... I was scared that if I was actually totally direct with what I wanted, I'd lose out.	Didn't want to confront him; didn't want to be in relationship where had to compromise what was important to me; was scared to confront in case I lost the relationship altogether	Coping Pattern Marital Conflict
18. You keep trying I think, and as long as the other person is not being totally impossible, then you can kind of rationalize it to yourself that you're not really giving up too much...or it's not important enough or something.	Kept trying as long as he was not totally impossible; tell yourself it's not that important	Coping Pattern Cost to Self

19. Probably there was a real lack of belief that we were equal. I don't think he believed that; he probably doesn't believe it now. It's just maybe something you're supposed to say if you're a male.	Husband didn't believe we were equal; something a man's supposed to say	Husband's Beliefs Perception of Males
20. Dad was the sole breadwinner and my mother every once in a while had a part-time job, but beyond that, it was really traditional. I'm the only child ...My dad always encouraged me to do just whatever I wanted in terms of study and so on and so forth, so I didn't get the idea that women should only stay at home.	Came from a traditional family; dad encouraged me to do what I wanted in terms of study; saw women were not limited to the home	Family Background Parent's Message
21. I probably was at the stage where I had to decide whether I was going to have children or not. I don't have children and that's another one of those decisions that I made probably. I didn't sit down and say well now I have to make a decision about children and the work, or combination of children and the work.	Decision had to be made about having children; decision made more by default; dual role of raising children and working	Decision Making: Children Demands on Time
22. Just chronologically, the times in which the career has been going on and has been moving through its stages, those have been the same times that I guess a lot of women--you either have your family or you don't have your family.	Decisions around career and childbearing come at same time	Decision Making: Children Timing of Roles
23. I've never been a person who said, oh I don't want children; never have been that kind of person, but the decisions I made and the and the timing of them, they add up to the fact that children were not as important as the challenges or the things I found I wanted to do in the work I was doing.	Never thought I didn't want children; timing pressure meant I had to set a priority and I chose my profession	Identification: Mother Decision Making: Children Priority
24. Betrayed, angry, disappointed, I think depending on how everything else had	Feeling angry and betrayed that he had	Feeling Betrayed

gone in the world at that time. Betrayed, implying anger at how could somebody do this to me; not fair.	turned on me like that	Marital Conflict
25. I think if you can go back and say, all right, let's say that when I was in my marriage I really decided okay, I am going to take this part-time sessional, I think then my work life would have been much less interesting. I would have had a job. I would have made some extra money, and then I might have more readily had a child because I would have thought, oh well good, I've got time, I can devote the time I need and so on and so forth. So the fact that I made the choices I did about work affected the other decisions I made consciously or unconsciously in having children or not having them. Given that it takes well, as you know, you don't become a professor of something over night. It takes a lot of years of training, so by the time you're old enough to enter your profession, it's almost time to start thinking right now whether or not you're going to have children. So all the decisions kind of come at the same time.	Being part-time would have made work less interesting; might have had a child if I had time to devote to it; work decisions affect other decisions; decisions come all at once	Priority Demands on Time Role Conflict Timing of Roles
26. I think that there's a wide sort of variety of responses you get from people about my age about why they do or do not have kids, and many of them really stem from the time at which the person entered the profession and the status of that person's marriage or relationship during the time that child-bearing was possible or not.	Number of reasons for not having children; childbearing decision affected by time entered profession and status of relationship	Decision Making: Children Timing of Roles
27. You may have a moment when you say, gosh, maybe I did the wrong thing. But I think you could say maybe I did the wrong	May have moments of regret; there can be regrets	Coming to Terms Decision

thing if you come to a point in your life where you can't have any more children and you have two and you think, oh my gosh, maybe I shouldn't have had these kids because now I don't think I'm giving them enough attention, or my work is suffering or whatever. So the point in your life when you think no more children or never any children, it's kind of a re-evaluation for everybody I'm sure and you--I mean if you're a reasonable person I'm sure you have regrets in both directions. But in the end you make your peace with yourself.	no matter what your decision about having children; have to make peace with yourself	Making: Children Demands on Time
28. When I was about 40, I went through a period when I was really sort of unhappy with myself--that I'd obviously made a decision without making it, to not have children.	There was a period when I felt unhappy about not making a conscious decision re: children	Feeling Sad Regret
29. Every time I choose to do something, I'm making choices not to do other things.	If I choose one thing, I forego another	Choice Making Trade-offs
30. You can't have everything. The minute you say yes to that, you'll be paying. You will not be able to do some other things you had planned. If you marry X, you can't marry Y. You cut off other relationships in some ways that you've had. And I think that sometimes we don't like to think that we're going to pay anything. It'll just be good, good, good, win, win, win.	Can't have everything; choosing one option means foregoing another; won't always be win, win, win	Choice Making Trade-offs Coming to Terms
31. Given all the circumstances, I'm not unhappy with the choices that I made consciously or subconsciously, and since I have children in my life, that seems fine to me--no great regrets. I think the regrets I had when I	I have no great regrets about choices I made; had to accept that I probably couldn't	Coming to Terms

had them and that was about five years ago, it wasn't a big long thing. I sort of sat down and thought well, I can't have everything, and I do believe that.	have everything	
32. I think you just have to say, well, I guess I firmly believe that people in the end, unless they're really oppressed, choose to do what they really want to do.	People do what they want in the end	Coming to Terms Priority
33. Two things that are really important to women. I mean they are the basic relationships that matter--having a partner, having a child. Those things we think society sort of tells us from the time we're little girls, these are the things that count, counts your identity as someone's wife or someone's long-time companion someone's mother. Even though or feminists say well, that shouldn't count all that much--I'm me as an individual--they do count and they matter for some things...I think they're the ones that count the most for your being a female.	Being a wife and mother basic relationships; Taught that they count most toward female identity; hard to separate individual worth from this strong societal norm	Societal Expectations Feeling Pressured Cost to Self
34. Women know that it's very hard not to have been listened to, and students are in the position of having no power, so if nobody wants to listen, professors don't have to listen to them. If they need to talk and they find a professor or administrator who'll actually listen, this is incredible.	Women are sensitive to the position of those with no power; it's good that they make the effort to listen to those people.	Fulfillment
35. I think women are very conscious of not fitting and becoming false at a certain point when they're with men in a male professional context. You're not treated necessarily badly; you're treated as one of the guys. So you adapt somehow to being "one of the guys", which means that sometimes you can feel a little bit lost if you don't really want to be like this all	Treated as one of the guys; try to adapt but sometimes feel lost; easier to accept role	Work/Personal Fit Feeling Devalued

the time; it's the role you've been cast in and it's easier to say, okay, we'll just do it this way.	you've been cast in	Cost to Gender
36. I was trying to be, I guess, more acceptable...When I went to court or when I went to the office, I'd look at myself in the mirror and then change to a black [suit] or gray or navy because it was power dressing and I think that says something about your being sort of uneasy with being a girl or a woman and not feeling comfortable with that, because you're not going to be listened to or you're going to be patted on the head in some respect, and so I modified my dress.	I tried to be more acceptable by dressing according to the norms of the professional world; modified my dress so as not to be treated with disrespect	Cost to Feminine Treatment by Males
37. If you're a professional and you feel because of the work you do you've had to give up or get lesser than other people in those areas [being a wife and mother], I think they're the ones that count the most for your being a female. There may be other things that you can say, I don't know, if I'd not been a professional and I just married somebody, I could have just spent his money and he might have had lots more money and I would have been richer or something like that, but again I don't think it really affects your perception of self as much as those two things do.	Being a wife and mother roles that count most for defining female; affect your self perception the most	Cost to Feminine Cost to Self Societal Expectations
38. It was always interesting to have lunch with other women who were lawyers, when you felt you were yourself again.	Being with other females made me feel like myself again	Female Comraderie
39. I think the part of you that is genuinely upset or moved by a client's problem, someone who really does get depressed by the work that you're doing and would	Lost part that can genuinely care about a client's	Cost to Self Work/ Personal

like to be able to express to people, colleagues, that you're not having a very good day, not just because so-and-so hasn't paid his bill, but because you don't know what to do about your client whose got all these problems...it's just not appropriate in that professional setting.	problems; not appropriate to do that in patriarchal law setting	Fit
40. I see that in the world there are men things, male things which I could do, and which people would let me do and I would be successful at that, but I don't want to do them. I want to do things which I think relate to me more as a woman than as a kind of working consciousness, and an ambitious person or whatever. Working with students is not--in the university context you're supposed to want to work with a bunch of figures and statistics. Working with students is considered a little bit inferior, but I really think it's important and I think women do it very well.	I could do male things; want to do things that I enjoy, like working with students; working with others considered inferior	Gender Difference Work/ Personal Fit
41. Maybe it is something that male lawyers feel the same kinds of pressures about, but I don't think so because the socialization of men into the professions is just different.	Maybe men feel the same pressure about not showing emotion but really think men and women are socialized differently	Gender Difference Perception of Males
42. You might say that to another female lawyer who might say, I'm really worried, I hope she's okay. You might even give her a call at home but you wouldn't tell a male colleague that you had done that because, first of all, you wouldn't bill it. It wouldn't be billable, and every phone call a lawyer makes is supposed to be billed to the firm...pretty	You might get support from female colleagues; you hide your feelings from male colleagues; men as hard-boiled	Female Comraderie Work/ Personal Fit Perception of Males

hard-boiled.		
43. I don't think you feel necessarily erased. Maybe when there was one woman or two women and you were really scared that you wouldn't even have a job if you didn't play along--that might have been one thing, but I do think we've made a little bit of progress so that there are enough of you either in that room or down the hall or in the building or somewhere close enough that you do not feel overall that you're lacking, that you've lost your value.	Having female colleagues has made me less scared of not going along; women have made progress in asserting their value	Female Comraderie Collective of Women
44. I think that's probably why I don't practice now. I don't work part-time for any firm, and if I ever did work for a firm again, I have a--I'm an active member of the Law Society but I only do things on my own. I would only work in a feminist firm.	Left practice in a firm because I didn't fit; choose my own work now; value feminist philosophy in workplace	Career Alternatives Work/ Personal Fit
45. As a profession, it distorts or mutes or represses things about women that are, in my mind, valuable things that women bring to the world.	Feel that law distorts and represses the feminine	Work/ Personal Fit Cost to Gender
46. The number of Ph.D's and all that are just about equal, but it's interesting to note that in most departments, very few women are full professors. There's a huge imbalance as you go up the steps to the full top ranks. So again, male dominance at the top.	Males still have most of top positions in academia	Hierarchy Feeling Devalued
47. It's not easy to be a champion and a pioneer.	Not easy to stand alone	Rely on self
48. In a very busy life I feel this need to have some place that's calm and quiet of my own, and I think it would be only fair when you talk about marriage and children, or lack thereof, that there's something	There is a need for calm and quiet in a busy life; I fill that space with	Self-Expression Balance

in me that's--there's too much demand. And so I can't have children because that just is too much. I need space for me and I carve that space off, and it's filled with music.	music	
49. Pieces of music that I listen to, I guess, when I feel some sort of real need to let my emotions be expressed somewhere else...'Carnival of Animals', which is a wonderful thing that really reminds you of kids running around and so on and so forth. So that's obviously a part of me that's expressed in music that I haven't expressed in my real life.	Listening to music helps me express my emotions; parts of me that don't get expressed in real life find an outlet through music	Self-Expression
50. The sense of fulfillment that you have is that you've done something, even in a small way, to help people get from Point A to Point B.	Helping others is fulfilling	Fulfillment
51. I think someone who does any kind of work with a keen ability to do it very well, really likes it, and who takes it as a creative task, is doing in my mind a profession. So, yes, a secretary in a department store whose been there for some time and who doesn't just ram the papers through but who really tries to work with staff, sees the needs are met--I think that's professional in nature...We make a kind of artificial distinction in society between that.	Doing a task well and creatively marks being professional; artificial distinction in society	Professional Identity
52. You don't become a professor of something overnight. It takes a lot of years of training.	Becoming professional also requires training	Professional Identity
53. There's that kind of single-mindedness so something has been given up, and maybe not given up easily because that's what you want.	Being professional requires dedication	Professional Identity
54. I like creative solutions.	Like to use	Fulfillment

I work with a lot of regulations ...I know what the rules are, and people who see me have always either violated the rules or they think the rules don't apply to them, or they want something changed in the rules to let them do something they want. I'm a great respecter of--I understand why we have the rules, so I try to think how of if to get around them, or in some cases, maybe we should change the rule book.	creative power to solve problems; bend or change rules if necessary to get a need met	Challenge the Rules
55. It's not [as] easy for a woman to be a professional...as it is for a man, because marriage and children and household responsibilities still very much revolve around the woman.	Caring for children and home make it more difficult for a woman to work outside	Women's Future
56. There are people who say, golly, I wish I'd gotten married: I could have gotten divorced but at least I would have been married so I would know what it's like. And I guess I'll have a baby because at least I'll know what it feels like. I'm not sure I want to, but everybody else is having a baby so I'd better have a baby so I know what it's like to experience motherhood, so I can say, I am a mother. I think it's really easy to be sucked into that, and I don't think that those are the only ways to define yourself. I do believe that that's out there, that that's what we see, but that there are other ways. I think that women as friends, as people in groups behave differently than men...I think you can get a sense of what you have as a woman just as readily as you can being a wife or a mother, but I don't think that's necessarily valued by the world as readily as it ought to be.	Strong societal pressure to follow traditional norms; women can also define their femininity through friendships or other group experiences; society doesn't value these roles as much for women	Societal Expectations Gender Defined
57. You're going to have to	Young	Generativity

negotiate very carefully with your partner how you are going to have a profession and a family and a relationship.	professional women will need to be diligent about negotiating re: their needs	
58. You might be given equal access to the education, equal access to the jobs, but on your personal life you're going to have to do some tap-dancing or juggling or whatever you want to call it, and it's a risk. It's a risk that you take.	Obtaining equality in the personal domain will require even more assertion	Generativity
59. I think someone who does any kind of work with a keen ability to do it very well, really likes it, and who takes it as a creative task, is doing, in my mind, a profession.	A professional approaches their work with motivation and enthusiasm	Professional Identity
60. We make a kind of artificial distinction in our society between that. There are certain women who choose not to work outside the home who would consider themselves as professional homemakers or whatever, and I think you have to respect that as well. it's another series of choices.	Women at home have just made different choices than women who go out to work; both deserve respect	Choice
61. I think I've had a pretty strong sense of being female ...I think I felt much more insecure about being a woman and feeling that I was a fairly feminine woman, that's the way I was, and wondering if that was okay? I don't think I feel that anymore.	Have strong sense of femininity; used to wonder if that was okay	Gender Identity
62. I don't think you have to give up being yourself. One of the things I like about a university is it accepts a whole lot of eccentricities.	Present workplace accepts uniqueness	Career Alternatives
63. You have to constantly tell yourself that, well, maybe you're not too happy about that but you're going to have to give	Can't dwell on regrets or what if; Grieve for a	Coming to Terms

that up and go on to something else. There's a time when you can feel bad and worn and grieve, and then eventually you have to move on. If you can't move on, then I think you have real problems of depression or neurotic behavior that goes on for years and years. Maybe with a lot of women that's partly the reason we feel uneasy about our roles because we haven't come to terms with what we had to give up.	time, then move on; maybe women haven't come to terms with what we gave up	
64. When I was about 40, I went through a period when I was really sort of unhappy with myself--that I'd obviously made a decision without making it, to not have children.	I was unhappy that I had not made a conscious decision about having children	Regret
65. It just seems you're driven to do what you want. You might find out after you choose that it's not everything you thought it was--then there's regret. But I believe in the decision-making process itself, whether you do it actively or you sit back and let it happen, you're doing what you want.	People do what they really want; there may be regrets	Coming to Terms Choice
66. It means that if you say that, then you're saying some other things too. You're saying you're responsible for your choices and you can't feel sorry for yourself because you don't have all the things that maybe as a woman you would like to have or at least would have liked to try, especially motherhood or staying at home and living the life of a wife, which I've never done and which sort of seems nice to me.	One needs to take responsibility for one's choices; it might have been nice to have been at home	Coming to terms
67. I don't think people necessarily set aside time to think about an issue that's going to face them in the next five years; i.e., if you're 34	People don't take enough time to think about the	Unresolved Issues Choice

and you decide well I'd really better think about child-bearing years now. I have to think about this. I don't believe people really do it that way. I think that time goes on, decisions are made, and then you turn around and realize what you did to get there.	consequences of the decisions there are making; you realize too late what you've given up

Table C-2

Description of How First Level Codes Were Clustered Into Second Level Themes

Second Level Themes	Description
1. Identity (Gender Defined: 56) (Gender Identity: 61) (Professional Identity: 51, 52, 53, 59)	Having to do with identity issues: gender, professional
2. Socialization (Family Background: 20) (Parental Message: 20)	Description of the norms and beliefs under which they were raised
3. Marriage (Spouse: 2, 4, 5) (Marital Conflict: 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 15, 17, 24) (Spouse's Beliefs: 19)	Having to do with the marriage: partner, conflict
4. Decision-Making (Priority: 11, 23, 25, 32) (Decision-making: Children: 21, 22, 23, 26, 27) (Identification: Mother: 23) (Choice: 29, 30, 60, 65, 67)	Issues involved in making decisions about marriage, children, profession.
5. Costs (Cost to Self: 18, 33, 37, 39) (Regret: 28, 64) (Cost to Gender: 35, 45) (Cost to Feminine: 36, 37) (Making Trade-offs: 29, 30)	Costs of pursuing a professional lifestyle
6. Expectations (Spouse's Expectations: 2) (Expectations From Others: 7, 8, 10) (Expectations of Self: 10) (Societal Expectations: 33, 37, 56)	Includes the expectations and the amount of choice women face to pursue professional life; also expectations when there
7. Feelings (Feeling Betrayed: 5, 24) (Feeling Tired: 11) (Feeling Pressured: 10, 33) (Feeling Sad: 13) (Feeling Devalued: 15, 35, 46)	Feelings involved in managing and living a professional life
8. Fulfillment (Fulfillment: 34, 50, 54)	Sources of fulfillment

9. Motivation (Motivation: 7, 8)	Motivation factors
10. Coping (Coping Pattern: 3, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18)	How conflict was coped with, mainly in relationships
11. Roles (Role Conflict: 6, 25) (Demands on Time: 21, 25, 27) (Timing of Roles: 22, 25, 26)	Description of how increased role responsibilities caused drain on time and energy
12. Empowerment (Coming to Terms: 13, 27, 30, 31, 32, 63, 65, 66) (Challenge the Rules: 54) (Balance: 48) (Self-Expression: 48, 49) (Rely on Self: 47) (Career Alternatives: 44, 62)	How these women empowered themselves, are empowering themselves despite the barriers
13. Supports (Spousal Support: 6) (Collective of Women: 43) (Female Comraderie: 38, 42, 43)	Inclusion of what supports helped the women manage manage or cope with the stresses of living a professional lifestyle
14. Gender (Perception of Males: 19, 41, 42) (Gender Difference: 40, 41)	Issues having to do with gender understandings
15. Position (Hierarchy: 46) (Work/Personal Fit: 35, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45) (Treatment by Males: 36)	Description of how these women felt about their position or place both at work and in general
16. Understandings (Evolution of Understandings: 1)	What they now understand about themselves on reflection
17. Future (Women's Future: 55) (Generativity: 57, 58) (Unresolved Issues: 67,	Issues having to do with the future: feminism, new generation, unresolved areas for contemporary professional women

Note. Numbers in parentheses refer to the numbered excerpts form Table C-1.

Table C-3

Description of How the Second Level Themes Were Organized Into Higher Order Themes

Higher Order Themes	Description
1. Identity - Gender Defined - Gender Identification - Position : Hierarchy : Work/Personal Fit : Treatment by Males - Feeling Sad - Feeling Devalued - Socialization : Family Background : Parent's Message	This theme describes how the women felt about their gender identity; how their gender influenced the degree to which they fit within a predominantly patriarchal work world; how they felt about that lack of fit; how they were socialized to believe they could fit
2. Choices/Decisions - Expectations : Spousal Expectations : Expectations From Others : Expectations of Self : Societal Expectations - Feeling Pressured - Priority - Decision-making: Children - Identification: Mother - Timing of Roles - Choice - Costs: Costs to Self : Costs to Gender : Costs to Feminine : Making Trade-offs - Motivation - Fulfillment	This theme has to do with choices and decisions the women faced as professional women; the degree of choice, how they had to prioritize, how they dealt with the decisions around marriage and children, how timing was a main factor, there have been costs but also rewards
3. Role Conflict - Role Conflict - Demands on Time - Feeling Tired	Being professional meant increased role demands, causing conflict
4. Relationships - Spouse - Marital Conflict - Feeling Betrayed - Spouse's Beliefs - Coping: Coping Patterns	This theme describes how the women's relationships were affected, and how they felt betrayed by their partners who gave mainly lip service support
5. Empowerment - Challenging the Rules - Balance	Details the myriad of both, internal and

- Self-expression - Rely on Self - Career Alternatives - Supports : Spousal Support : Collective of Women : Female Comraderie	external, that the women empowered themselves or were empowered
6. Understandings - Evolution of Understandings - Gender: Perception of Males : Gender Differences - Professional Identity	Having come thus far in their professional experience, this theme lists some of the things that they say they learned about themselves, about men, about differences between the genders, and about what it means to be professional
7. Future Orientations - Coming to Terms - Unresolved Issues - Generativity - Women's Future	This theme describes some topics of future interest: what professional women today have to still resolve and hopes for the next generation

Table C-4

Description of my Second Attempt at Interpretation of Themes

In attempting to hear what the women were in essence telling me, I went back to the first level coding and re-organized them in the following way.

Higher Order Theme	Description
1. Being Told Who To Be (Expectations of Self/From Others: 7, 8) (Societal Expectations: 33, 37, 56) (Motivation: 7, 8) (Family Background: 20) (Parent's Message: 20) (Gender Defined: 56) (Gender Identity: 61)	The sense of self being externally defined through familial and societal influences.
2. Not Knowing Who To Be (Spouse: 2, 4, 5) (Spouse's Expectations: 2) (Marital Conflict: 3, 4, 5, 12, 15, 17, 24) (Coping Pattern: 3, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18) (Feeling Betrayed: 5, 24) (Role Conflict: 6, 25) (Spousal Support: 6) (Feeling Pressure: 10, 33) (Feeling Tired: 11) (Priority: 11, 23, 25, 32) (Feeling Sad: 13, 28) (Feeling Devalued: 15, 35, 46) (Cost to Self: 18, 33, 37, 39) (Cost to Gender/Feminine: 35, 36, 37, 45) (Treatment by Males: 36) (Husband's Beliefs: 19, (Decision-making: Children: 21, 22, 23, 26, 27) (Demands on Time: 21, 25, 27) (Timing of Roles: 22, 25, 26) (Identification: Mother: 23) (Work/Personal Fit: 35, 39, 40, 42, 44, 45) (Hierarchy: 46)	Feminine further devalued; emphasis on "doing" to cope; splintering of self to try to fit established order; feelings resulting when even this does not bring value.
3. Fighting For Who I Am (Coming to Terms: 13) (Career Alternatives: 44, 62) (Rely on Self: 47) (Challenge the Rules: 54)	Turning points where established order is rejected; shift to internal realities.

4. Growing In Who I Am (Evolution of Understandings: 1) (Perception of Males: 19) (Fulfillment: 34, 50, 54) (Female Comraderie: 38, 42, 43) (Gender Difference: 40, 41) (Perception of Males: 41, 42) (Collective of Women: 43) (Self-expression: 48, 49) (Professional Identity: 51, 52, 53) 59)	Listening to own wisdom; learning new ways to be; reaching out to break isolation
5. Implications for a Generation (Making Trade-offs: 29, 30) (Choice: 29, 30, 60, 65, 67) (Regret: 28, 64) (Women's Future: 55) (Balance: 48) (Generativity: 57, 58) (Coming to Terms: 27, 30, 31, 32, 63, 65, 66) (Unresolved Issues: 67)	Battles yet to resolve; hopes for the next generation of professional women